

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS  
BEAUMONT DIVISION

Peter Harris and Loni Harris,

*Plaintiffs,*

v.

Upwintrade.com, a business association; David Shamlian, an individual; John Does 1 – 20,

*Defendants.*

Case No. 1:24-cv-00313

**Affidavit of Evan Cole**

I, Evan Cole, state and swear as follows.

**I. Introduction**

1. My name is Evan Cole. I am of sound mind and capable of making this Affidavit. I have personal knowledge of the facts stated herein.
2. I am the founder of Digital Investigations, LLC. I am experienced in blockchain investigations and am knowledgeable about the pig-butchering scam epidemic and the tactics of cybercriminals like the Defendants in this case. I hold the Chainalysis Cryptocurrency Fundamentals and the Chainalysis Reactor Certifications.

## **II. Pig-Butchering Scams**

3. I have reviewed the Plaintiffs' Verified Complaint, their Motion for *Ex Parte* Temporary Restraining Order and Expedited Discovery (the "Motion"), and relevant evidence described below. I have concluded that the Plaintiffs were the victims of what is known as a "pig-butchering scam." This is a type of cybercrime that has proliferated in recent years. I have reviewed Section III(A) of the Motion, which sets out background related to the pig-butchering epidemic. Based on my training and experience, I verify that the statements set out there are true and correct.

4. The method of initial contact, style of communications, deceptive tactics, and the nature of the 'trading platform' used by the Defendants show that this was a pig-butchering scam. I have attached the following publicly available materials for comparison to the facts of this case:

- a. Exhibit 1-A is a ProPublica article titled *What's a Pig-Butchering Scam?*, which describes in detail the tactics used by scammers, which map directly on to the facts of this case.
- b. Exhibit 1-B is a Secret Service bulletin titled *Cryptocurrency Investment Scams*, which includes a list of "Warning Signs," al-most all of which of which were present in this case.
- c. Exhibit 1-C is an excerpt from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Internet Crime Complaint Center's *2023 Internet Crime Report*, which shows that investment scams are the largest source of reported losses of any internet crime.

d. Ex. 1-D is an excerpt from *How Do Crypto Flows Finance Slavery? The Economic of Pig Butchering*, a 2024 academic paper that studied the pig-butchering epidemic.

e. Exhibit 1-E is a Reuters article titled *Crypto Scam: Inside the Billion-Dollar Pig-Butchering Industry*, which describes the organization, management, and tactics of the criminal syndicates that operate pig-butchering scams.

5. Comparison of these news reports, articles, and law-enforcement bulletins to the allegations in the Harrises' Complaint shows that this case bears all the classic signifiers of a pig-butchering scam. Based on my training and experience, I have concluded beyond any doubt that the Harrises were the victim of just such a scam perpetrated by the Defendants.

### **III. Blockchain Background**

6. I have reviewed Section III(C) of the Motion, which explains blockchain technology, blockchain-tracing methodologies, and crypto-asset recovery methods. Each of the statements in Section III(C) is accurate, to the best of my knowledge and experience.

### **IV. Blockchain Tracing**

7. I have reviewed Section III(D) of the Motion, which sets out information about the blockchain tracing of the assets stolen from the Plaintiffs. I verify that the statements set out there are true and correct.

8. Exhibit 1-F is a true and correct copy of a graph showing the tracing of the assets stolen from the Harrises to the Target Accounts

identified in the Motion. This graph was generated using Chainalysis Reactor, a leading blockchain-analytics software.

9. At its leftmost edge, the graph reflects transactions in which the Harrises sent cryptocurrencies with collective transfer-date value of \$665,971.94 to addresses controlled by the Defendants. The circles labeled “Upwintrade Receiving Address” are the addresses to which the operators of the Upwintrade platform instructed Plaintiffs to transfer their assets.

10. Continuing to the right, each circle represents a distinct blockchain address. The lines between the circles show the flow of funds from one address to another. At the graph’s right edge, there are four circles labeled “Remitano,” “Revolut,” “Bybit,” and “Binance” (the “Receiving Exchanges”). These are the exchange-associated-address clusters to which the Harrises’ stolen assets were ultimately transferred.

11. To ensure that only assets traceable to the Harrises were captured in my analysis, I filtered the transactions directed to the Receiving Exchanges by date, capturing only those transactions that occurred *after* the Harrises’ assets arrived at the address that later transferred those assets to the relevant Receiving Exchange. I then exported a ledger of those transactions. A true and correct copy of this ledger is attached hereto as Exhibit 1-G.

12. Based on the evidence described above and on my training and experience, I have concluded that the accounts associated with the

transactions detailed in the transaction ledger attached as Exhibit 1-G are likely controlled by the Defendants and either hold or have held the Harrises' stolen assets and other proceeds of criminal activities.

13. As explained in the Motion, it is very easy to move cryptocurrencies on the blockchain. Crypto assets can be moved in seconds from address to address, or exchange to exchange. Based on my experience, if the Target Accounts are not frozen, it is likely the individuals who stole the assets held there will move them to a non-compliant exchange or a self-custody address, which would prevent the Harrises from recovering the assets stolen from them, thereby causing significant and irreparable harm.

#### **V. Subpoena Targets**

14. I have performed an "open-source intelligence" investigation in this matter in addition to the blockchain investigation described above. Open-source intelligence refers to publicly available information available about a subject, often technological in nature.

15. The Harrises set out their proposed subpoena targets in the Motion at Section IV(B)(1). I have attached evidence showing the connection of each of these subpoena targets to this case as follows.

<i>Subpoena Target</i>	<i>Connection to Case</i>	<i>Evidence</i>
Microsoft Corporation	Microsoft owns Skype, the messaging app that Shamlian primarily used to communicate with the Harrises.	Exhibit 1-H
Meta Platforms, Inc.	Meta owns Facebook, where the deception at issue in this case began	Exhibit 1-I

	and where the Harrises communicated with the defendants.	
SRS AB	SRS AB is the domain registrar for Upwintrade.com.	Exhibit 1-J
Mastercard Inc.	A “built-with” search of Upwintrade.com shows that, at some point, a Mastercard payments processing tool was installed on the site.	Exhibit 1-K
Visa Inc.	A “built-with” search of Upwintrade.com shows that, at some point, a Mastercard payments processing tool was installed on the site.	Exhibit 1-K
Data Room, Inc.	Data Room provided the U.S.-based servers from which the Defendants operated upwintrade.com.	Exhibit 1-J
LLC Technology Distribution Ltda	This entity owns and operates JivoChat, a live-chat plugin that the Defendants used to communicate with victims on Upwintrade.com.	Exhibit 1-L
Wild West Domains, LLC	This entity is the domain registrar for davidshamlian.com, the personal website of David Shamlian.	Exhibit 1-M
OrangeHost LLC	This entity provides web-hosting services for davidshamlian.com.	Exhibit 1-M
Elementor Ltd.	The Defendants used the Elementor site-building tool to build the website at davidshamlian.com.	Exhibit 1-N
Binance, Ltd.	A significant portion of the Bitcoin that the Defendants stole from the Harrises was ultimately deposited in accounts at the Binance cryptocurrency exchange.	Exhibit 1-F

Revolut Technologies, Inc.	A significant portion of the Bitcoin that the Defendants stole from the Harrises was ultimately deposited in accounts at Revolut, which is a “neobank” that offers both crypto- and fiat-denominated accounts.	Exhibit 1-F
Babylon Solutions Limited	This entity owns and operates the peer-to-peer cryptocurrency exchange Remitano. A significant portion of the Bitcoin that the Defendants stole from the Harrises was ultimately transferred to Remitano accounts.	Exhibit 1-F
Bybit Fintech Limited	A significant portion of the Bitcoin that the Defendants stole from the Harrises was ultimately deposited in accounts at the Bybit cryptocurrency exchange.	Exhibit 1-F

16. For the reasons set out in the table above, each of the Harrises' proposed subpoena targets are likely to be in possession of biographical, contact, payments, and/or account-activity information about the Defendants. Businesses like those operated by the proposed subpoena targets typically maintain such information in databases that allow for straightforward data isolation and export, such that the burden of providing the information requested by the Harrises will be minimal.

**[SIGNATURE PAGE FOLLOWS]**

## VERIFICATION

I, Evan Cole, hereby verify and declare under penalty of perjury  
that the foregoing is true and correct.



Marlene Levett Austin

REGISTRATION NUMBER

8065741

COMMISSION EXPIRES

June 30, 2027

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me  
on 07/30/2024 by Evan Cole.

Commonwealth of Virginia  
County of Chesterfield

Evan Cole  
Founder & Investigator  
Digital Investigations, LLC  
evan@digitalinvestigations.co

Dated: 07/30/2024

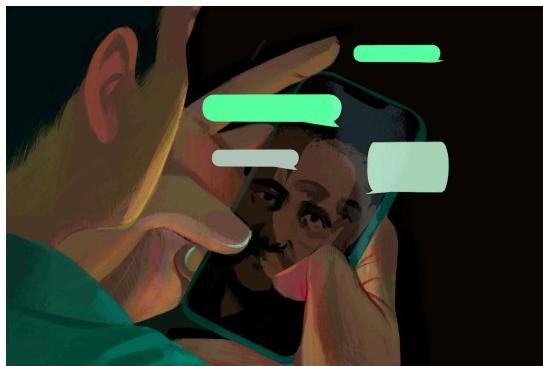
Notarized remotely online using communication technology via Proof.

## Exhibit 1-A

 PROPUBLICA

# What's a Pig Butchering Scam? Here's How to Avoid Falling Victim to One.

Thousands have lost huge sums after being lured into fraudulent online investment schemes by seemingly attractive strangers who strike up online conversations with them. Here's a guide to spotting the telltale signs.



Tara Anand, special to ProPublica

by Cezary Podkul

Sept. 19, 2022, 3:50 p.m. EDT

*ProPublica is a nonprofit newsroom that investigates abuses of power. Sign up to receive [our biggest stories](#) as soon as they're published.*

If you're like most people, you've received a text or chat message in recent months from a stranger with an attractive profile photograph. It might open with a simple "Hi" or what seems like good-natured confusion about why your phone number seems to be in the person's address book. But these messages are often far from accidental: They're the first step in a process intended to steer you from a friendly chat to an online investment to, ultimately, watching your money disappear into the account of a fraudster.

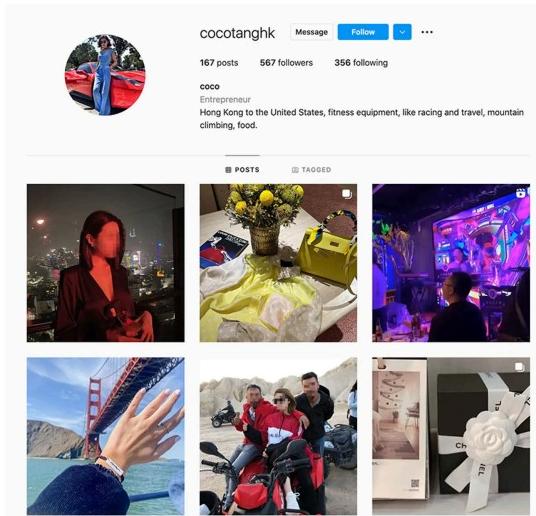
"Pig butchering," as the technique is known — the phrase alludes to the practice of fattening a hog before slaughter — originated in China, then went global during the pandemic. Today criminal syndicates target people around the world, often by forcing human trafficking victims in Southeast Asia to perpetrate the schemes against their will. ProPublica recently published an [in-depth investigation of pig butchering](#), based on months of interviews with dozens of scam victims, former scam sweatshop workers, advocates, rescue workers, law enforcement and investigators, along with extensive documentary evidence including training manuals for scammers, chat transcripts between scammers and their targets and complaints filed with the Federal Trade Commission.

"We've had people from all walks of life that have been victimized in these cases and the paydays have been huge," said Andrew Frey, a financial investigator for the Secret Service, the federal agency that is taking a lead role in [combating online crime](#) and trying to help victims recover their stolen funds.

These swindles are not only highly organized but also systematized. Here's how the fraudsters typically go about it, including photographs, excerpts from text exchanges between scammers and targets, advice from training guides for fraudsters and police reports from pig butchering cases:

## 1. Create a fake identity

Pig butchers most often begin by creating a phony online persona, typically accompanied by an alluring photo (which itself might have been stolen) and images that convey a glamorous lifestyle.



This Instagram profile was [reported to the Federal Trade Commission](#) by a Florida resident who complained of losing \$89,000 to a pig butchering scam. (Meta, which owns Instagram, said it's investigating the account, whose owner didn't respond to a request for comment.) Screenshot blurred by ProPublica

## 2. Initiate contact

Once they've got an online profile, fraudsters begin sending messages to people on dating or social networking sites. Alternatively, they may use WhatsApp or another messaging service and pretend to have stumbled on a "wrong number" as they contact you. (A spokesperson for Meta, which owns WhatsApp, previously told ProPublica that the company is investing "significant resources" into keeping pig-butchering scammers off its platforms.)

In December 2020, a Connecticut man received these messages on WhatsApp from a seemingly friendly stranger. He responded and eventually ended up getting tricked into two scams that cost him a total of \$180,000.

[12/28/20, 12:06 AM] SCAMMER J: Long time no see, how are you recently

[12/28/20, 10:10 AM] SCAMMER J: 🤖 Are you not Kevin? Sorry, I guess I added the wrong person, sorry

[12/28/20, 10:16 AM] TARGET C: Not Kevin.

[12/28/20, 10:16 AM] SCAMMER J: Sorry, I made the wrong call. Since I have many business partners, my assistant saved the wrong number, please forgive me

[12/28/20, 10:17 AM] TARGET C: No prob. What country are you calling from?

[12/28/20, 10:17 AM] SCAMMER J: I come from Hong Kong. Hong Kong is a metropolis with technology, finance and food. Have you ever been here

[12/28/20, 10:18 AM] SCAMMER J: Acquaintance is fate, where are you from

[12/28/20, 10:18 AM] TARGET C: I'm from NYC originally

[12/28/20, 10:19 AM] SCAMMER J: Your place is a very beautiful place, I went there years ago

### **3. Win the trust of the target**

The next step is starting a conversation with a potential victim to gain their trust. The scammers often initiate benign chats about life, family and work with an eye toward mining their targets for information about their lives that they can later use to manipulate them. They'll fabricate details about their own life that make them seem similar to you. After all, people like people who are like them.

When a Houston woman revealed that her brother was born with cerebral palsy, a crook countered with a similar-sounding tale:

[2/25/21, 6:32:38 PM] TARGET P: I have one brother that is handicapped and lives with my parents. Of course he's coming with them for the weekend

[2/25/21, 6:35:36 PM] SCAMMER C: I see. My parents are taking care of my brother. I hope he will live well

...

[2/25/21, 6:38:49 PM] TARGET P: My brother was born with cerebral palsy

[2/25/21, 6:39:19 PM] SCAMMER C: Sorry things, but also hard for your parents

[2/25/21, 6:39:29 PM] TARGET P: He's healthy over all but you have to do everything for him. He can't talk, dress, or feed himself

### **4. Sign them up**

Before long, the swindlers will pivot to a discussion of investing. They'll make claims about their own purported investing successes, perhaps sharing screenshots of a brokerage account with gaudy numbers in it. They'll try to convince targets to open an account at their online brokerage. Unbeknownst to the target,

the brokerage is a sham, and any money deposited will go straight to the scammer. Most victims don't figure out that last part until it's too late.

Guides for scammers recommend touting the reliability of MetaTrader, a trading app that fraudsters use for nefarious purposes, by pointing out that the app is available in Apple's App Store, so it must be safe. (MetaTrader did not respond to requests for comment. An Apple spokesperson said the company has shared complaints with MetaTrader's parent company, and asserted that the parent has taken steps to respond to the complaints.)

### **5. Get them to put real money into the fake account**

Once marks agree to learn investing tricks, the scammers will "help" them with the investment process. The fraudsters will explain how to wire money from their bank account to a crypto wallet and eventually to the fake brokerage. Typically the fraudster will ease the process by recommending a modest initial investment — which will inevitably show a gain.

A woman in Michigan became intrigued by her online boyfriend's references to making money trading gold and offered to become his student. Two days later, he was teaching her how to get started investing in a fake brokerage accessible through MetaTrader:

[3/16/21, 4:40:00 PM] TARGET T: What are you up to right now?

[3/16/21, 5:11:42 PM] SCAMMER L: I'm reading a book

[3/16/21, 5:14:39 PM] TARGET T: What book are you reading?

[3/16/21, 5:17:02 PM] SCAMMER L: A book about investing in gold

[3/16/21, 5:19:04 PM] TARGET T: Nice. You should teach me.  
Make me your student.

[3/16/21, 5:20:37 PM] SCAMMER L: 😊 I don't want you to be my student. I want you to be my wife.😊

### **6. "Prove" that it's legitimate**

Scammers often allay initial doubts by letting targets withdraw money once or twice to convince them the process is trustworthy. For example, fraudsters allowed a Canadian man named Sajid Ikram to withdraw 33,000 Canadian dollars, according to a statement he filed with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. That returned money helped convince him that his investment was real. He reported ultimately losing nearly \$400,000, including money borrowed from several friends.

### **7. Manipulate them into investing more**

That's only the beginning. Pig butchering guides offer insights on how to exploit marks' emotional and financial vulnerabilities to manipulate them into depositing more and more funds. It starts with assurances that the investments are risk-free, then escalates into pressure to take out loans, liquidate retirement savings, even mortgage a house.

Over a period of nine days, one scammer (who called herself Jessica) escalated her pressure, pushing the target, a California man, first to use his cash on hand, then to tap his retirement savings, then to borrow money.

[11/3/21, 8:03:13 PM] TARGET Y: I just don't want to risk

[11/3/21, 8:03:42 PM] SCAMMER J: When you need money, you can ask for it at any time

[11/3/21, 8:04:08 PM] SCAMMER J: This is not a risk, it is called maximizing profit

...

[11/8/21, 5:31:53 PM] TARGET Y: what can I do

[11/8/21, 5:32:27 PM] SCAMMER J: Your 401K can't move?

[11/8/21, 5:32:50 PM] TARGET Y: You know how that works. Heavy penalties plus double taxation

[11/8/21, 5:32:53 PM] SCAMMER J: Then you can earn it back with a fine.

...

[11/11/21, 6:20:05 PM] SCAMMER J: Borrowing money from the bank is not a big deal, I often do

[11/11/21, 6:22:11 PM] TARGET Y: I am not ignoring you. I am trying to think

[11/11/21, 6:22:45 PM] SCAMMER J: You are a wise man, this is borrowing a chicken to lay eggs

[11/11/21, 6:23:23 PM] SCAMMER J: Really rich people use bank money to invest

## **8. Cut them off**

Once targets reach a limit and become unwilling to deposit more funds, their seeming investment success comes to a sudden stop. Withdrawals become impossible, or they suffer a big "loss" that wipes out their entire investment.

The California man was aghast when he discovered \$440,000 he'd deposited was gone. Ultimately, the swindler persuaded him to invest another \$600,000, which also disappeared into the swindler's account.

[11/18/21, 11:59:16 AM] TARGET Y: I lost all my money

[11/18/21, 11:59:18 AM] SCAMMER J: If the principal is not enough, it cannot be supported to the profit point.

[11/18/21, 11:59:34 AM] SCAMMER J: Don't worry,

[11/18/21, 11:59:46 AM] TARGET Y: I am negative \$480k

[11/18/21, 12:00:01 PM] SCAMMER J: Prepare the funds and earn them back.

[11/18/21, 12:00:12 PM] TARGET Y: I don't have any money or funds to prepare

[11/18/21, 12:00:20 PM] TARGET Y: That's all I have!!!!!!!!!!!!

## **9. Use their desperation to your advantage**

Scammers will then turn the screws of manipulation tighter by telling victims there's a potential solution: If they deposit more cash into the brokerage, they can regain what they lost. Sometimes, the claim is that the investment is successful — but there's a "tax problem" that requires paying additional funds equal to, say, 20% of their total account value. If the victim pays, the scammer will claim that new obstacles have arisen that require paying new fees.

No matter how much targets pay, it's never enough, as detailed in the [FTC complaint](#) excerpted below, which was filed by a pig butchering victim in Maryland. This person lost almost \$1.4 million, in part because the person kept meeting scammers' demands to pay taxes and various fees to get their money back:

"Once the trading has ended, I applied to withdrawal my money and profit from the website. The broker asked me to pay a tax on the profit of 88,587.90 usd on 8162021, this amount was wired again through Bank of America into a foreign account in Hong Kong. Another request for me to pay security deposit on my profits which was 83,950.00 usd wired out to a different foreign account in Hong Kong once again. The broker asked for a bank and withdrawal processing fee of 27,983.34 usd again was wired out to a different foreign account in Hong Kong. The very last wire was for expediting the withdrawal and the platform asked for 55,966.60 usd wired out to Hong Kong. At this point I already had to much money in the platform so I kept giving in."

## **10. Taunt and depart**

Once the targets are aware that they've been swindled, the fraudsters often insult or taunt them. They soon go silent, and the websites of their phony brokerages stop working. Then they relaunch a new website under a different URL and restart the process with other targets.

After nearly four months of chatting and \$30,000 in losses for the Michigan victim, her scammer seemed to revel in unveiling the financial — and emotional — deception:

[7/1/21, 3:25:31 PM] SCAMMER L: I'm a liar, too.

[7/1/21, 3:25:42 PM] TARGET T: What do you mean you are a liar?

[7/1/21, 3:25:58 PM] SCAMMER L: But I am very kind, I only cheated you out of 30K, thank you for 30K

[7/1/21, 3:26:16 PM] TARGET T: Wow.

[7/1/21, 3:26:55 PM] TARGET T: You deleted this message.

[7/1/21, 3:27:23 PM] TARGET T: You don't really love me? We are not getting married?

[7/1/21, 3:27:44 PM] SCAMMER L: Surprise or surprise. I'm not surprised.

## **What to Do If You've Been Scammed**

If you've been victimized, report the crime to your bank and law enforcement — the FBI, the Secret Service and local police — as quickly as possible. The longer you wait, the harder it is for your bank to reverse any fraudulent transactions and for law enforcement to trace, freeze or seize stolen funds. "We are definitely going to be more successful if you immediately report," said Erin West, deputy district attorney at the Santa Clara County District Attorney's office, which has had some success seizing assets linked to pig butchering scams.

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**Cezary Podkul**

Cezary Podkul is a reporter for ProPublica who writes about finance.

[✉ cezary.podkul@propublica.org](mailto:cezary.podkul@propublica.org) [@Cezary](https://twitter.com/Cezary)





United States  
Secret Service  
Cybercrime  
Investigations

Exhibit 1-B

## Cryptocurrency Investment Scams

**The U.S. Secret Service continues to observe a significant increase in cryptocurrency and digital asset investment scams. These scams often target victims who use social media, online dating, or professional networking platforms.**

The execution of these scams varies but typically involves a potential victim receiving a message from another registered user of these platforms. The message directs the potential victim to visit a website or to download a smartphone application supposedly associated with a cryptocurrency or digital asset investment opportunity. In some situations, the victim may also be enticed to make payments directly to the scammer in order for the latter to “manage” the investment in question. In reality, these alleged investment projects are scams designed to steal funds from the victim.

### PIG BUTCHERING

One variation of these scams is known as “Pig Butchering” and occurs primarily on professional networking websites, through seemingly misdirected text messages, or online dating platforms. This begins with a message from a perceived professional contact, an individual sending a text in error, or an individual seeking a romantic relationship. The communication evolves into victims being convinced to make investments in cryptocurrency or digital asset projects. The victims make payments via traditional bank or wire transfers, bitcoin ATMs, or cryptocurrency transactions through smartphone applications or websites.

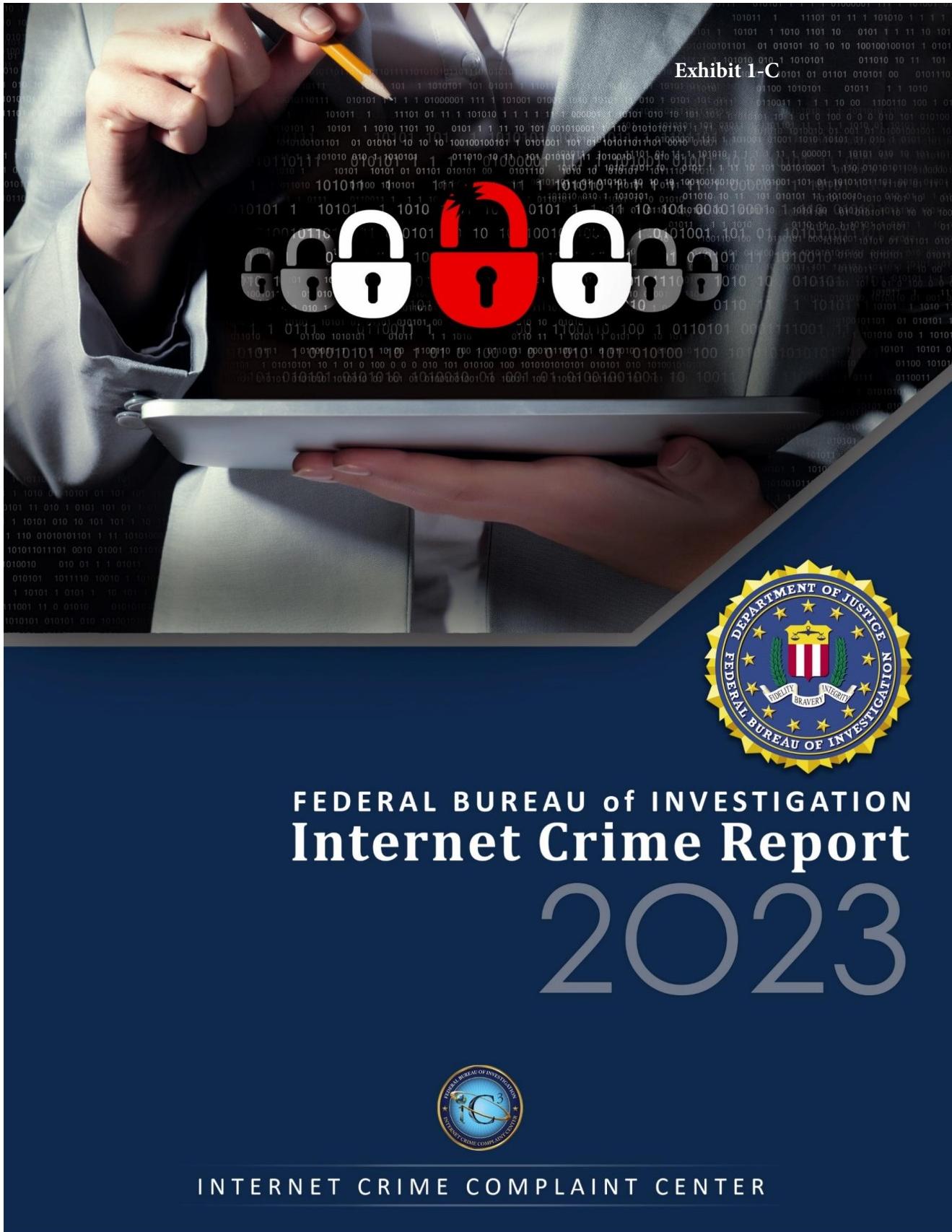
The victims in this situation are referred to as “pigs” by the scammers, because they use elaborate storylines to “fatten up” victims into believing they are in trusted partnerships. The scammers then refer to “butchering” or “slaughtering” the victims, after victim assets are stolen and ultimately causing victims financial and emotional ruin.

To learn more about digital assets, click here to visit the Secret Service Digital Assets page.

### WARNING SIGNS:

- ❖ Receiving a solicitation on online dating, social media, or professional networking websites to invest in cryptocurrency or digital asset projects by either transferring funds directly to the individual or creating an account on a website or smartphone application.
- ❖ Receiving a request from a new contact to transfer funds via a Bitcoin ATM, bank or money remitting service, or smartphone application or website as an investment opportunity or to assist with a financial hardship.
- ❖ Receiving a communication promoting an online investment opportunity through a website which includes poor spelling or grammatical structure, dubious customer testimonials, or general amateurish web layouts.
- ❖ Receiving a request to create an account and share the account login credentials to assist with investment management.
- ❖ Receiving a message requesting to remotely connect to a computer and assist with creating an online account.
- ❖ Receiving a request to download software, plugins, or browser add-ons to use the processing power of a computer or smartphone for cryptocurrency mining or digital asset investment purposes.
- ❖ Receiving a request to pay taxes or fees to access the investment portfolio or release funds.

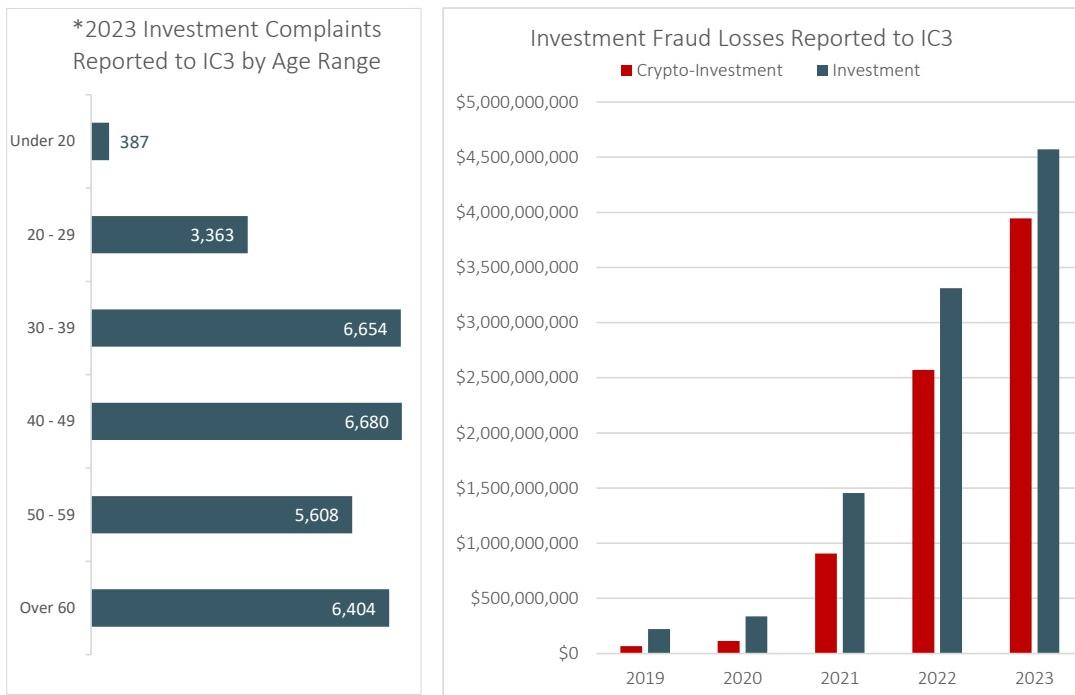




## INVESTMENT



In 2023, the losses reported due to Investment scams became the most of any crime type tracked by the IC3. Investment fraud losses rose from \$3.31 billion in 2022 to \$4.57 billion in 2023, a 38% increase. Within these numbers, investment fraud with a reference to cryptocurrency rose from \$2.57 billion in 2022 to \$3.96 billion in 2023, an increase of 53%. These scams are designed to entice those targeted with the promise of lucrative returns on their investments.<sup>7,8</sup>



*\*Does not include complainants that did not provide an age range.*

### IC3 publications in 2023 Related to Investment Fraud

- The FBI Warns of a Spike in Cryptocurrency Investment Schemes
- FBI Guidance for Cryptocurrency Scam Victims
- Increase in Companies Falsely Claiming an Ability to Recover Funds Lost in Cryptocurrency Investment Scams
- Criminals Pose as Non-Fungible Token (NFT) Developers to Target Internet Users with an Interest in NFT Acquisition

<sup>7</sup> Accessibility description: 2023 Investment Complaints Reported to IC3 by Age Range.

<sup>8</sup> Accessibility description: Chart shows Investment Fraud Losses Reported to the IC3 by Year for 2019 to 2023.

Exhibit 1-D

# How Do Crypto Flows Finance Slavery? The Economics of Pig Butchering\*

John M. Griffin<sup>†</sup>      Kevin Mei<sup>‡</sup>

February 29, 2024

## Abstract

Through blockchain addresses used by “pig butchering” victims, we trace crypto flows and uncover methods commonly used by scammers to obfuscate their activities, including multiple transactions, swapping between cryptocurrencies through DeFi smart contracts, and bridging across blockchains. The perpetrators interact freely with major crypto exchanges, sending over 104,000 small potential inducement payments to build trust with victims. Funds exit the crypto network in large quantities, mostly in Tether, through less transparent but large exchanges—Binance, Huobi, and OKX. These criminal enterprises pay approximately 87 basis points in transaction fees and appear to have recently moved at least \$75.3 billion into suspicious exchange deposit accounts, including \$15.2 billion from exchanges commonly used by U.S. investors. Our findings highlight how the “reputable” crypto industry provides the common gateways and exit points for massive amounts of criminal capital flows. We hope these findings will help shed light on and ultimately stop these heinous crimes.

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\*This paper is dedicated to all pig butchering victims, those defrauded and those enslaved, and especially the victim who gave us the impetus to write this paper. We are thankful for helpful comments from David Dicks, Gleb Domnenko, Cesare Fracassi, Sophia Hu, Brandon Kirst, Samuel Kruger, Alex Pettyjohn, Alex Priest, Marius Ring, Amin Shams, Michael Sockin, Qinxi Wu, and seminar participants at Baylor University, Integra FEC, the University of Rochester, the University of Texas-Austin and the University of Texas-Dallas. We thank Juan Antonio Artero Calvo, other research assistants, and especially Joseph Newcomer for excellent programming assistance. We thank Jan Santiago, Raymond Hantho, Chainbrium, and the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) for providing addresses collected as part of a USIP whitepaper. We further thank Integra FEC for use of their bulk tracing tools and for substantial crypto-research support. Griffin is an owner of Integra FEC and Integra Research Group, which engage in financial consulting, research, and recovery on a variety of issues related to the investigation of financial fraud.

<sup>†</sup>McCombs School of Business, University of Texas at Austin.

<sup>‡</sup>McCombs School of Business, University of Texas at Austin.

Crypto friendship or romance scams have proliferated. Random social media or text messages attempting to develop an online relationship are now commonplace. In a subset of cases, the friendly relationships slowly morph into full-blown scams known as “pig butchering” or *sha zhu pan*, which, in the extreme, bleed lonely, sick, and distressed victims, often with little exposure to investments and crypto, into the loss of their life savings. Though varied in nature, the origin of these scams is often even darker, as the manpower powering the communications is often enslaved in compounds thought to hold 220,000 victims in Southeast Asia.<sup>1</sup> This paper examines how these criminal organizations are financed through cryptocurrencies. How do criminal networks use crypto to move victim funds? Where does capital enter the network? Where do the funds exit? What obfuscation methods are employed? How pervasive is this activity? How can it be stopped?

Money flows are the lifeblood of organized crime by financing both current and future illegal activity. If illicit financial flows continue to grow and are uninterrupted, then the criminal network will typically expand. With this in mind, the international financial system has developed a framework, including Know Your Customer (KYC) and Anti-Money Laundering (AML) provisions, to combat the financing of transnational organized crime. However, with the emergence of Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies specifically designed to create an anonymous alternative financial system, criminal networks now have new avenues to avoid detection and seizure of funds. Nevertheless, crypto is rarely used as a medium of exchange to purchase goods and services, and thus typically needs to be converted from and back to fiat currencies, such as U.S. dollars. The entry and exit points into the crypto ecosystem are typically crypto exchanges, which also purport to conform to international laws designed to mitigate illicit financial flows.

Although cryptocurrencies are designed to be anonymous, the nature in which the transactions clear on the blockchain provides a ledger that tracks the movement of funds. Thus,

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<sup>1</sup>Section 1 provides a brief overview of the nature of the schemes and summary evidence compiled from government reports, investigative reporting, and documentaries.

the transactions are quasi-anonymous in that, by applying algorithms and substantial effort, it is often possible to determine where funds enter, move through, are swapped into different cryptocurrencies, and exit the crypto ecosystem.

We utilize data from pig butchering victim reports to determine the cryptocurrency addresses where victims were directed to send their funds by scammers. We start with 3,256 Ethereum addresses, 770 Bitcoin addresses, and 702 Tron addresses. Most addresses are used ten or more times, and 28% of addresses are used more than one hundred times. Of these initial sets, Ethereum addresses receive \$5.8 billion in funds, compared to \$389 million for Tron and \$373 million for Bitcoin. Given that the Ethereum addresses represent approximately 88% of the total funds, we begin by examining Ether (ETH, the native cryptocurrency on Ethereum) and token (commonly known as ERC-20 tokens) transactions on the Ethereum blockchain.

Our primary approach is to track the flows entering and exiting scammer addresses and apply detailed bulk tracing algorithms to follow the paths of ETH and ERC-20 tokens that trade on the Ethereum blockchain. Based on blockchain information from an unfortunate U.S. victim who lost their retirement and life savings of approximately \$465,000, we first show how their funds left their exchange's wallet in the form of ETH, USDC, and Bitcoin, were forwarded to another address, and subsequently swapped to other tokens using a relatively obscure decentralized exchange called Tokenlon. The pattern of this victim's funds is strikingly similar to that of many other adjacent nodes connected to the scamming network and many other reported victim cases.

We trace victim funds in bulk and follow their paths to centralized exchange deposit addresses from January 2020 to February 2024.<sup>2</sup> Figure 1 plots the resulting network for a three percent sample of nodes from the traced network and highlights many features. First, the figure shows how crypto often originates from large exchanges where investors commonly

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<sup>2</sup>The data and analyses in this paper were last updated on February 20, 2024.

have accounts (Coinbase, Crypto.com, and Binance) and flows into the network. Second, funds are often swapped for Tether (known as USDT) through Tokenlon. Third, after circulating through various hops in the network, crypto exits the system through centralized exchange deposit addresses. Fourth, transactions in amounts above \$100,000 and in particular \$1 million commonly transfer funds to deposit addresses on Binance, Huobi, and OKX.

Across all exchanges, the scammer network initiated 104,460 deposits to centralized exchanges for amounts below \$10,000, most commonly in small amounts clustering at round numbers, such as \$100, \$200 or \$500. The transaction patterns mirror the characteristics of *inducement payments* in pig butchering scams, which are small payments from scammers to victims used to build trust. Of these, 31,980 transactions are sent to Western exchange deposit addresses, including Coinbase (15,249) and Crypto.com (15,433), while the remainder is concentrated in Binance, Huobi, and OKX.<sup>3</sup> We find 83% of potential inducement payments are sent from addresses used in more than ten transactions, suggesting limited monitoring by crypto exchanges.

Since scammers are unlikely to return large sums of stolen funds, we consider deposit addresses that receive more than \$100,000 as more likely to be scammer deposit addresses. These addresses are rarely associated with Western exchanges, but are common within Binance, Huobi, and OKX, as well as exchanges such as Kucoin, Bitkub, and MXC. The common feature of these exchanges is that they have loose KYC procedures and are perceived to be outside of U.S. jurisdiction.<sup>4</sup> To more fully understand the scope of the network, we apply “deposit address clustering” ([Victor, 2020](#)) by tracking addresses that send funds into these deposit addresses and finding other recipient deposit addresses associated with the same user.<sup>5</sup> To avoid capturing payments made by criminals for things like inducement

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<sup>3</sup>Throughout this paper, we include Coinbase, Crypto.com, Kraken, Gemini, and FTX as Western exchanges because these can be accessed by US-based users.

<sup>4</sup>Most notably, the [DOJ announced on November 21, 2023](#) that Binance plead guilty to disregarding anti-money laundering laws, had the CEO step down, and agreed to pay a more than \$4 billion penalty.

<sup>5</sup>This heuristic relies on the facts that an exchange customer may have multiple deposit addresses and

payments, we exclude all connections below \$100,000 and only consider direct connections. Using this method to link additional deposit accounts likely controlled by scammers, we find \$75.3 billion of Ethereum-based inflow through February 2024 to these addresses. Portions of this total could capture funds associated with other related networks that interact with the criminal networks; however, additional robustness analyses indicate that this is likely a conservative lower-bound estimate and the total size may be considerably larger.

After analyzing the network unveiled from tracing scammed funds forward, we also trace backwards from deposit addresses to find the largest sources of fund flows. We then collect the set of all nodes in the forward trace and backward trace and find \$15.2 billion of funds that originate from five Western exchanges over the last four years, from over 1.25 million transactions from potential victims, averaging over \$12,000 per transaction. Because our tracing is overly conservative to avoid potential false trace paths, this likely understates the scope of funds originating from Western crypto exchanges.

Within the trace path, we observe many distinct features of the network graph that shed light on how romance scams and money launderers operate. Scammers extensively recirculate and swap funds across different addresses and cryptocurrencies. These transactions incur costs, but may help obfuscate the true source of their funds. We estimate that transaction costs for a network of this scale total to 87 basis points as a portion of outflows to exchange deposit addresses. In contrast, [Soudijn and Reuter \(2016\)](#) find costs of 7-16% to move physical Euro bills from Europe to Columbia and money laundering commission estimates range from 4-12% ([US Treasury Department, 2002](#)) and 10-20% ([US Treasury Department, 2007](#)). Cryptocurrencies thus appear to be a much more cost-effective channel for moving illicit funds across borders. In total, scammer swap transactions may constitute more than 58% of Tokenlon transactions since 2022. We observe large inflows from potentially Chinese

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any funds sent to these may only be accessed through the exchange; therefore, if a given blockchain address transfers tokens to two exchange deposit addresses, then it is likely that the two addresses are controlled by the same user. Deposit addresses are each assigned to a single verified account or user and thus provide an opportunity to examine the broader scope of the flows a user receives.

victims in 2020; however, after the Chinese financial authorities banned cryptocurrency trading in late 2021, there appears to be a dramatic decrease in Chinese victims and a shift to US-based victims. Overall, in the set of addresses touched by the criminals, we find \$1.172 trillion dollars of volume, 84% of which is in Tether.

As a placebo test, we compare a trace analysis of pig butchering addresses to phishing scam addresses. Pig butchering networks have larger transactions and receive more funds than phishing scams. Transactions in phishing scams use proportionally more ETH and lead towards Uniswap, Kucoin, and Binance. This also highlights how our methods can be applied to other criminal crypto spaces. We also trace 770 Bitcoin addresses and find that the Bitcoin scam network funnels scammed funds into Tokenlon, Binance, Huobi and OKX. We follow these paths from the Bitcoin to the Ethereum blockchain and find 78% of Bitcoin cross-chain paths intersect with our Ethereum trace paths, further indicating the importance of the Ethereum network in criminal activity. We find the network of scammer nodes is highly connected, likely indicating that there exist widely-used services that funnel funds for extremely large and possibly related criminal networks.

It is our hope that this research, along with those of other researchers and practitioners will expose how crypto finances these dark activities.<sup>6</sup> This project highlights how large-scale tracing of tainted funds can help expose and understand criminal financial activity that can hopefully be used as a roadmap in other criminal contexts.

There are several other practical implications of our study. First, organized or “legitimate” crypto exchanges serve as the on- and off-ramps for billions of dollars in criminal proceeds. Users with a crypto exchange account should realize that crypto exchange users

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<sup>6</sup>“One of the most effective ways to deter criminals and to stem the harms that flow from their actions—including harm to American citizens and our financial systems—is to follow the criminals’ money, expose their activity, and prevent their networks from benefiting from the enormous power of our economy and financial system.” From M. Kendall Day while acting Deputy Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division of the U.S. Department of Justice. He is now an attorney at Gibson Dunn and has previously served as counsel for Binance. He also states: “More broadly, money laundering undermines the rule of law and our democracy because it supports and rewards corruption and organized crime, allowing it to grow and fester” ([U.S. Senate, 2018](#)).

are frequent targets of scams, and their funds are just a quick transfer away from being irreversibly lost—a risk that is far less prevalent for traditional investment accounts. Second, our findings indicate that the large players in the crypto space are likely not sufficiently protecting their customers from scams. Third, the Ethereum network appears to drastically reduce barriers for illicit financial flows of transnational organized crime. Fourth, romance scammers prefer the stablecoin Tether over other cryptocurrencies and the Ethereum network over Bitcoin. Fifth, decentralized exchanges also serve as large swapping points to exchange crypto and obfuscate funds. Crypto hedge funds and users (many based in the U.S. and Europe) who might purport to engage in “arbitrage” or “liquidity trading” ([PWC, 2023](#)) may simply be making profits by facilitating low-cost money laundering. Finally, the large centralized crypto exchanges located in jurisdictions with opaque regulatory environments (Binance, Huobi, OKX, and others) seem to be preferential potential exit points that can further finance extremely large amounts of criminal activities. Such activity has continued as of February 16, 2024, despite recent crackdowns.

## **1 Related Literature and Background on Pig Butchering and Crypto**

### **1.1 Related Literature**

Our paper relates to three main literatures. First, there is a growing literature examining dark market activity in the crypto space. [Meiklejohn et al. \(2013\)](#) show how clustering algorithms can be used to identify Bitcoin transactions moving funds through the Silk Road, a darknet marketplace that operated between 2011 and 2013. [Foley et al. \(2019\)](#) find that 46% of non-exchange-related Bitcoin activity from January 3, 2009 to April 2017 is associated with darknet websites. They estimate that 27 million Bitcoin users conduct \$76 billion in annual activity, which by some estimates is 3/4<sup>th</sup> of the size of the U.S. drug trade. However, [Makarov and Schoar \(2021\)](#) use more conservative assumptions that account for potential double-counting and find that illegal activity, scams, and gambling account for less than 3% of Bitcoin volume over a more recent period from 2015 to 2021. In 2020, they estimated over \$5 billion in dark market activities, online gambling, association with bitcoin mixers, and

scams. [Cong et al. \(2023b\)](#) examine 21,650 addresses involved in sextortion, blackmail scams, and ransomware. Though ransomware is underreported, they show that 43 ransomware gangs carried out 2,690 attacks from May 2019 to July 2021.<sup>7</sup> [Amiran et al. \(2022\)](#) studies the role of cryptocurrencies in terrorism financing. The academic literature mainly focuses on dark market activity in Bitcoin. In contrast, we detail the nature of activity on Ethereum, which includes techniques such as swaps between tokens and multiple transactions to seemingly evade detection. Since we only focus on funds in the network for one type of scheme and the funds we track are larger than those tied to the dark markets for Bitcoin in 2020 ([Makarov and Schoar, 2021](#)), the amount of criminal activity on Ethereum may be many times larger than previously estimated. We also make a methodological contribution by showing how bulk tracing multiple streams of funds moving through the network, including from Bitcoin to Ethereum, can help provide a more complete map of broader cryptocurrency networks.

Second, there is a growing literature related to other types of nefarious trading activity in crypto, including price manipulation, pump-and-dump schemes, and wash trading.<sup>8</sup> [Cong et al. \(2023a\)](#) examine common crypto scams including those of investment, ICO, rug pulls, phishing, blackmail, and Ponzi schemes. [Gandal et al. \(2018\)](#) show price manipulation of Bitcoin in 2014. [Griffin and Shams \(2020\)](#) show that Bitcoin prices were manipulated upward through the partially unbacked printing of Tether, which helped to fuel Bitcoin and other cryptos in 2017 and 2018. [Li et al. \(2018\)](#) and [Hamrick et al. \(2021\)](#) provide detailed evidence of pump-and-dumps of crypto tokens. [Phua et al. \(2022\)](#) estimate that 38.7% or \$12 billion of capital from 5,935 ICOs were likely scams. [Pennec et al. \(2021\)](#) and [Cong et al. \(2023b\)](#) study crypto wash trading. [Cong et al. \(2023b\)](#) shows that wash trading accounts for trillions

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<sup>7</sup>[Chainalysis \(2023\)](#) produces an annual summary report that tracks possible amounts of stolen funds, scams, sanctions, dark markets, ransomware, cyber security, fraud shows, child abuse materials, terrorism finance, and malware. They estimate over \$20 billion in such total illegal activity in 2022 with \$5.9 billion in scams in 2022, most of which they estimate to be investment and giveaway scams, not romance scams. They note that their figures are undercounting and that romance scams appear to be growing. [Reiter and Bitrace \(2024\)](#) examines blockchain addresses associated with two U.S. and two Chinese pig butchering victims and shows overlap in the addresses where funds are sent. [Sokolov \(2021\)](#) finds that Bitcoin transaction activity and fees increased around times of ransomware activity in 2014-2015.

<sup>8</sup>[Griffin and Kruger \(2024\)](#) briefly survey forensic crypto research.

of dollars of fake trading and over 70% of centralized exchange volume, with varying degrees across exchanges.

Third, we contribute to the literature on organized crime. In a survey of the literature, [Levi \(2015\)](#) notes that the lack of access to capital, and little overlap between the licit and illicit economy makes criminal enterprises rely on the re-investment of profits for growth. [El Siwi \(2018\)](#) notes that the recognition that “money is the lifeblood of organized crime” led to the adoption of the anti-money laundering (AML) regime in Italy.<sup>9</sup> [Conrad and Meyer \(1958\)](#) show how the strong economic incentives of slavery meant that the activity would have likely persisted if not for political intervention. Organized crime often purchase legitimate enterprises for money laundering ([Mirenda et al., 2022](#)) or utilize cash and various shell companies to obfuscate transactions moving into the banking system. Overall, examining criminal fund flows in the traditional banking system or through cash transfers is primarily limited to prosecuted case records, which explains the lack of academic research and reliable estimates of such activity. In a survey of the literature, [Levi \(2015\)](#) states: “we have little information about the mechanisms of financing.” This paper seeks to partially fill this void.

## 1.2 Background on Pig Butchering

Romance and related friendship scams appear in various forms. In this section, we describe common variants discussed by documentaries, investigative reporting, and online blogs.<sup>10</sup> Romance scams often begin with seemingly random messages in the form of a text, WhatsApp message, or messages on social media platforms to the wrong person.<sup>11</sup> The scammers are looking for a victim who is lonely, going through tough times (such as

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<sup>9</sup>[Draca and Machin \(2015\)](#) survey a growing literature on the economic relation between crime and unemployment, earnings, and education, and find that the economic incentives for crime are important. [Leukfeldt et al. \(2019\)](#) examine criminal investigations of organized crime in the Netherlands and find that technological knowledge for cybercrime is often gained through a smaller set of technically skilled enablers in online market places.

<sup>10</sup>In-depth descriptions by investigative reporters and documentarians include sources such as [ProPublica](#), [the BBC \(via YouTube\)](#), and [Faux \(2023\)](#).

<sup>11</sup>The [UN \(2023\)](#) notes that contact in the forms of “Boo, Facebook, Grindr, Hinge, Instagram, Lazada, Line, LinkedIn, Meet Me, Muslima, OkCupid, Omi, Shopee, Skout, Telegram, TikTok, Tinder, WeChat, WhatsApp, and Wink.”

a medical condition or divorce), and has sufficient cash.<sup>12</sup> First, there is a friendship or trust-winning stage, often spanning multiple months, which can also include the illusion of romantic potential.

After the scammer has earned the victim's trust, the topic of investments will arise. Victims, often with little or no crypto exposure, will be encouraged to open an account at a legitimate, well-known crypto exchange that victims can verify, trust, and easily transfer funds to that account. Scammers will claim to have an edge at another seemingly professional platform and encourage victims to transfer crypto funds to a provided crypto address; however, this second platform is fake or spoofed, and the crypto address is actually owned by the scammer. On the fake platform, it will appear as if the victim has quickly generated significant returns. Often the person is encouraged to withdraw funds from the platform back to the original account at the legitimate crypto exchange to build trust. This is known as an inducement payment because it induces the victim to send more funds. Through this process, the scammer can capitalize on both cryptocurrencies' reputation as a viable new technology, as well as the infrastructure connecting the traditional financial system and the cryptocurrency ecosystem to easily onboard funds.

Upon feeling more certain that the investment opportunity is real, victims often make larger deposits. Some victims have drained their savings and investment accounts, borrowed up to their credit card limit, paid penalties to convert their retirement funds, borrowed from friends and family, or placed another mortgage on their home. In the final stage where a victim seeks to withdraw funds, they are often asked to pay "taxes" on the fictitious profits before the funds can be withdrawn.<sup>13</sup> Ultimately, the scam does not end until the victim cuts contact, or the scammer is sure that the victim is bled dry of funds. The scammers

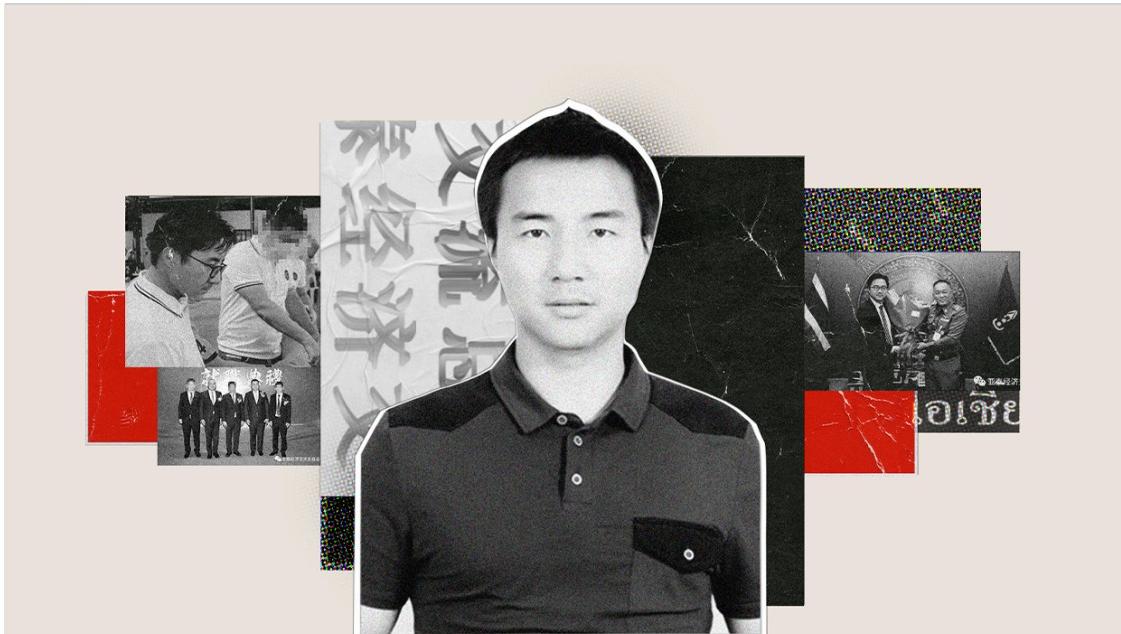
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<sup>12</sup>A survey by the Global Anti-Scam Organization of 550 victims showed that victims from all stages in life are susceptible. Victims typically range between 30 to 60 years old, are often well-educated, and include both men and women. <https://www.globalantiscam.org/post/statistics-of-crypto-romance-pig-butcheringscam>

<sup>13</sup>A survey of 550 victims as of 2022 found that 77% emptied their savings accounts and 33% were driven into debt by scammers. <https://www.globalantiscam.org/post/statistics-of-crypto-romance-pig-butcheringscam>

**Exhibit 1-E**

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A REUTERS SPECIAL REPORT

**Crypto scam: Inside the billion-dollar ‘pig-butchering’ industry**

Fraudulent crypto investment schemes directed from Asia known as “pig butchering” have become a global billion-dollar industry. But little is known about those who benefit. Reuters traced at least \$9 million linked to such scams to an account registered to a well-connected representative of a Chinese trade group in Thailand.

By [POPPY MCPHERSON](#) and [TOM WILSON](#) | Filed Nov. 23, 2023, 11:45 a.m. GMT

**A**t a Thai police headquarters in October 2022, Chinese businessman Wang Yicheng congratulated one of Bangkok’s most senior cybercrime investigators on his recent promotion, presenting the official with a large bouquet of flowers wrapped in red paper and a bow.

Wang, the vice president of a local Chinese trade group, wished the new cybercrime investigator “smooth work and new achievements,” according to the group’s website, which displays photographs of the event.

Over the past two years, Wang has forged relationships with members of Thailand’s law-enforcement and political elite, the trade group’s online posts show. During that time, a cryptocurrency account registered in Wang’s name was receiving millions of dollars linked to a type of cryptocurrency investment scam known as pig butchering, a Reuters investigation has found.

In total, crypto worth more than \$90 million flowed into the account between January 2021 and November 2022, according to registration documents and transaction logs reviewed by Reuters. Of that, at least \$9.1 million came from a crypto wallet that U.S. blockchain analysis firm TRM Labs said was linked to pig-butcherer scams. Two other major crypto-tracking firms also said the account received funds linked to such scams.

The victim of one of the scams was a 71-year-old California man. He sent money to crypto wallets that channeled more than \$100,000 into the account in Wang's name, according to blockchain analysis company Coinfirm. The man's family told Reuters he lost about \$2.7 million, his life savings, after falling prey to someone claiming to be an attractive young woman called Emma.



A 71-year-old man living in California says he lost about \$2.7 million last year after falling prey to a crypto investment scam. Funds linked to that scam reached an account in the name of Chinese businessman Wang Yicheng, Reuters found. REUTERS/Carlos Barria

The previously unreported transactions provide rare insight into the finances of pig-butcherer scams, which involve engaging unsuspecting people online. Scammers cultivate trust and then persuade victims to invest in fraudulent crypto schemes, sometimes via fake websites built to look like legitimate trading platforms. Sometimes the targets initially receive real returns to trick them into believing the scheme is legitimate.

Such scams have drawn intensifying scrutiny from global law enforcement over the past year, but little is publicly known about the people behind them.

Wang, who is 41 according to the account registration documents, didn't respond to detailed questions for this article. Neither did the Thai government, the Thai police or the Bangkok-based trade group Wang represented, the Thai-Asia Economic Exchange Trade Association.

Some aspects of the pig-butcherer operation remain murky. Lisa Wolk, a blockchain intelligence analyst at TRM, said the crypto account in Wang's name "is a node in a money laundering network and not necessarily the ultimate recipient of funds." Reuters was unable to determine whether anyone else benefited from the account or used Wang's identity to open it.



Chinese businessman Wang Yicheng has forged relationships with some of Thailand's law-enforcement and political elite. Here, he congratulates a police cybercrime investigator on a promotion. The photo was posted by the Thai-Asia Economic Exchange Trade Association to its WeChat account in October 2022.

In January, agents from the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Secret Service attended a briefing about cyber fraud, according to Erin West, a California prosecutor specializing in cybercrime who participated. A 72-page presentation prepared for the attendees, which Reuters reviewed, provides details on cyber scams operated from Southeast Asia and cites Wang as among alleged beneficiaries. The presentation depicts money flowing into a crypto wallet identified as belonging to Wang, notes his role at the Thai-Asia association, and includes a picture of his identity card and other photos of him.

The FBI and Secret Service declined to comment on the briefing, or on whether Wang was part of any investigation. The briefing was given by the Global Anti-Scam Organisation, a U.S. non-profit that advocates for fraud victims and investigates cases.

The crypto account registered to Wang was held at Binance, the world's largest crypto exchange, according to three blockchain analysis firms. Asked about the account, Binance spokesperson Jessica Jung declined to comment on individual users or Reuters' findings. In an August post on its website, the company said the number of reports of pig-butcherling scams it had received this year was double that of 2022, an increase it attributed to an influx of inexperienced crypto investors and scammers looking to exploit them.

Crypto fraud has emerged as a multibillion-dollar criminal specialty that has entrapped victims around the world. In the United States alone, victims reported losses of \$2.6 billion from pig butchering and other crypto fraud last year, more than double the previous year, according to the FBI. The true scale of the losses is unknown because victims are often too embarrassed to report crimes to authorities.

In April, the U.S. Department of Justice said it seized about \$112 million worth of crypto linked to pig-butcherling scams, without identifying suspects. A warrant that resulted in the seizure of more than half that amount specified a Binance account registered in Thailand.



Wang is vice president of a Bangkok-based trade group called the Thai-Asia Economic Exchange Trade Association. The screenshots of him here are from the association's website.  
REUTERS/Florence Lo

### 'Absolute devastation'

West, the California prosecutor, said many victims in the hundreds of pig-butcherings cases she has handled since early 2022 have lost more than \$1 million. Many are never able to recover their money. West said at least one victim died by suicide and another attempted suicide. "I've never seen this level of absolute devastation," she added.

Pig-butcherings scams originated in China, financial crime specialists say. Many are now run by criminal organizations out of Southeast Asia that use victims of labor trafficking to contact individuals around the world, the U.S. Treasury said in September. Cases are difficult to prosecute. Perpetrators are typically "ruthless transnational organized crime syndicates" that thrive on corruption, Jeremy Douglas, regional representative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, told Reuters.



Erin West, a California-based prosecutor specializing in cybercrime, said many of the victims of pig-butcherings scams she has dealt with have lost more than \$1 million. Erin West/Handout via REUTERS

Several scams connected to deposits made into the account in Wang's name were run from an industrial park on the Myanmar-Thai border, one of the blockchain analysis firms told Reuters. Workers are trafficked to the area, known as KK Park, by gangs that force them to con people online, according to two former workers and groups that support workers or scam victims.

The Thai government, Myanmar's ruling military junta and the Myanmar border guard that controls the area didn't respond to questions about the industrial park or whether gangs operate there. Reuters was unable to contact the park's owners.

### **"They will try to use your weakness to gain what they need."**

The 71-year-old crypto investment fraud victim, on the people who scammed him

China has announced a crackdown on cyber scams in recent months in partnership with Thailand and Myanmar. Thailand has also said it is combating cyber fraud. Thai police in September announced the arrest of several Chinese nationals in connection with a crypto investment fraud operation.

Binance publicly said it assisted Thai police with a probe into "a significant pig butchering scam," and that about \$277 million of assets were confiscated. Thai police didn't respond to questions about the operation or whether there was any connection to Wang.

### **Birds' nests to crypto**

Wang was born in 1982 in the port city of Ningbo on China's east coast, according to the identity card used to register the crypto account.

In his late twenties and thirties, he started several businesses in China, mostly related to technology, including computer and electronics sales, according to publicly available corporate records. The records show one business involved selling birds' nests, a culinary delicacy in China often used in soups.

By 2018, Wang had moved south to the coastal city of Xiamen, according to the identity card. By the following year, all of his Chinese-based businesses had been de-registered, apart from one in Ningbo that shut down in September of this year, the corporate records show. That firm, called Ningbo Laizheda E-Commerce Company, didn't respond to a request for comment.

#### RELATED CONTENT



How crypto giant Binance became a hub for hackers, fraudsters and drug traffickers



Binance's Zhao pleads guilty, steps down to settle US illicit finance probe



'Hundreds of thousands' trafficked into SE Asia scam centres - UN

Wang branched out into businesses in Thailand. In 2018, he became a partner of the Thai arm of a major Chinese maker of crypto production gear called Bitmain, according to Thai corporate records. In response to Reuters' questions, Bitmain said Wang was not an employee but a "close partner" and customer who purchased its bitcoin mining machines. Bitmain said it supplies "digital miners in the legal way."

# \$2.6bn

Reported losses from pig butchering and other crypto fraud last year in the U.S. alone.

The crypto account in Wang's name was registered in November 2020, according to the financial records Reuters reviewed. The three blockchain-analysis firms determined the account was with Binance. The documents, which relate to the Binance account, span two years to November 2022. They show that the account was accessed mostly from Bangkok.

Deposits started arriving in the account in early 2021 and quickly increased in size to include sums of more than \$100,000, the financial records show.

By October 2021, Wang had become vice president of the Thai-Asia Economic Exchange Trade Association, according to the group's website. The group formed in 2019 to unite overseas Chinese businessmen in Thailand, the website says. It says the group is committed to promoting cultural exchanges and business investment between Thailand and China and other Asian countries.

The group also publicly espoused the Chinese government's political positions. In an undated video on the group's website, Wang and other association leaders chant, "Build a Thai-China bridge, tell China's story well!"

The Thai-Asia trade association until recently shared its small office building in Bangkok with another Chinese group, the Overseas Hongmen Cultural Exchange Center, corporate records and photographs show. The two groups also shared some common leadership: The head of the Overseas Hongmen group was an adviser to the Thai-Asia association, according to the Thai-Asia association website.

In February, Thai police said it raided the Hongmen group's part of the office, alleging the group had ties to the 14K Triad. The United States has called the 14K Triad one of China's largest criminal organizations. In 2020, Washington sanctioned Wan Kuok Koi, known as Broken Tooth, accusing him of being a 14K leader and attempting to create a network of businesses, including cryptocurrencies, to export crime and co-opt elites in Southeast Asia. He could not be reached for comment.

A month after the Thai police raid, the Overseas Hongmen Cultural Exchange Center was dissolved, corporate records show. Neither the Hongmen center nor the Thai-Asia association responded to questions on the raid.



The Thai-Asia Economic Exchange Trade Association, based in the suburbs of Bangkok, says it formed in 2019 to unite Chinese businessmen in Thailand. REUTERS/Staff



The association shares a building with another Chinese group called the Overseas Hongmen Cultural Exchange Center, which Thai police raided earlier this year. REUTERS/Staff

### 'Honorary advisers'

Wang and other trade group leaders have courted senior officials in Thailand. The trade group's website details at least 100 meetings since its formation with officials in the Thai police and government, as well as with staff of the Chinese embassy in Thailand and visiting Chinese officials.



Among the Thai-Asia Economic Exchange Trade Association's "honorary advisers" is Kornchai Klaiklueng, assistant to Thailand's national police chief and former head of the cybercrime police. Photo via Royal Thai Police website

Reuters found no evidence that Thai and Chinese officials were aware of the pig-butcher connections to the account in Wang's name. The Thai government, the Thai police and the Chinese embassy in Bangkok didn't respond to questions about the meetings. China's foreign ministry, in response to questions about Wang and his interactions with Chinese officials, said, "We are not aware of relevant circumstances."

The association also appointed at least eight senior Thai officials as "honorary advisers," according to its website. It says some of the trade group's leadership served as advisers to the police, including its president, who advised the police cybercrime unit. The association's representatives and officials frequently exchanged gifts, from whisky and fine wines to "precious Buddha statues," the website details.

Among the advisers named on the association's website is Kornchai Klaiklueng, who headed the Thai police's cybercrime division until last year and is now assistant to the national police chief. Photos posted on the trade group's social media account show Kornchai participated in events with Wang or other trade group leaders on more than 10 occasions between December 2019 and August 2023.

Another listed adviser is Chataphantakarn Klaiklueng, the head of the Bangkok division of the cybercrime police. Chataphantakarn is the police official to whom Wang paid his congratulatory visit in October 2022. Kornchai and Chataphantakarn are brothers according to Chataphantakarn's Facebook page. They have another brother, Ponganan Klaiklueng, who's also a cop, according to Ponganan's social media account and a local media report. Ponganan is also an adviser to the trade group, the association's website says.

During a November 2021 visit to the trade association's office, Chataphantakarn praised the friendship between Thailand and China and said his family has "Chinese blood," according to a video posted to his Facebook page. At the time, Chataphantakarn ran training for the Thai police, the trade association's website says.

Weeks later, the association announced on its website that it was funding a renovation of a police shooting range and other facilities. The association didn't respond to questions on the funding.

mp.weixin.qq.com

竞技赛场上，参赛选手多为现役军人或职业射击能手，但是亚泰理事代表队员们丝毫没有气馁，面对巨大挑战依然斗志满满迎战。在经过射击教练对射击要领和比赛规则的讲解介绍后，每位队员领取子弹20发，即刻进入赛程。经过紧张激烈的四轮射击后，按照每位选手中靶环数总和多寡进行评比名次。最后比赛结果，虽然不能夺冠，但是成绩也算优异。而参加比赛目的，不是为了名次，只是作为一次难得的娱乐活动，让会员间彼此加强联系，增进友谊。活动圆满！

Scan to Follow

亚泰经济交流总商会

Wang and other members of the Thai-Asia trade association take part in a pistol shooting competition organized by the Thai military. The photo was posted by the Thai-Asia Economic Exchange Trade Association to its WeChat account in August 2022. Faces pixelated by Reuters.

The Thai police and the three brothers didn't respond to requests for comment on the police officials' relationship with Wang.

Among the most senior of Wang's contacts is Thammanat Prompao, Thailand's agriculture minister. A political power broker, he played a key negotiating role in the recent formation of Thailand's coalition government.

Thammanat was sentenced to prison in Australia on drug-trafficking charges in the 1990s, according to Australian and Thai court records. He served four years in prison and was released in 1997, according to Australian media reports. He told Thailand's parliament in 2020 that he was caught with flour.

In a December 2021 meeting with Thammanat at his office in Bangkok, Wang and other representatives of the trade group presented the politician with a hamper that included bottles of Johnnie Walker whisky, according to the association's website. Thammanat has also held an honorary position at the association, according to a video and articles on the trade group's website.

Thammanat didn't respond to requests for comment. In a video published in November 2022 by Thai PBS, a local TV channel, Thammanat denied any involvement with Chinese criminals in response to media reports alleging that he had such ties.



Thammanat Prompao, Thailand's agriculture minister, in 2019. He is also among the Thai officials that the Thai-Asia trade group says held an honorary position at the association.  
REUTERS/Soe Zeya Tun

### 'Complex layering scheme'

In 2022, the volume of crypto reaching the account in Wang's name mushroomed to almost \$79 million, a near six-fold increase on the previous year, the account records seen by Reuters show.

Coinfirm, the blockchain analysis firm that reviewed the transaction records for Reuters, said deposits from funds linked to pig-butcherling scams it previously investigated began entering the account as early as February 2022. Stolen crypto was moved to the account via a "complex layering scheme," involving multiple different wallets, Coinfirm's then-head of fraud investigations Roman Bieda told Reuters in May. The crypto moved between "dozens" of wallets and was mixed with funds from other sources, he said.

Some \$9.1 million flowed to the account registered in Wang's name from the wallet linked by TRM to pig-butcherling scams. The funds were moved in more than 50 transactions between August and October 2022.

Coinfirm linked the funds to pig-butcherling scams based on information gathered from multiple victims and from publicly-available information, Bieda said.

Coinfirm said it identified funds originating from four pig-butcherling scams. One involved a website called bigoneit.site, which channeled some of the funds the California man invested in the scam to the Wang-registered account. The site was a fake version of a legitimate crypto exchange called BigONE.

The 71-year-old man works in a home improvement store and lives alone. A Chinese American who immigrated to the United States in the 1980s, he built up his savings by working and contributing to a pension, while also trading stocks, according to his niece.

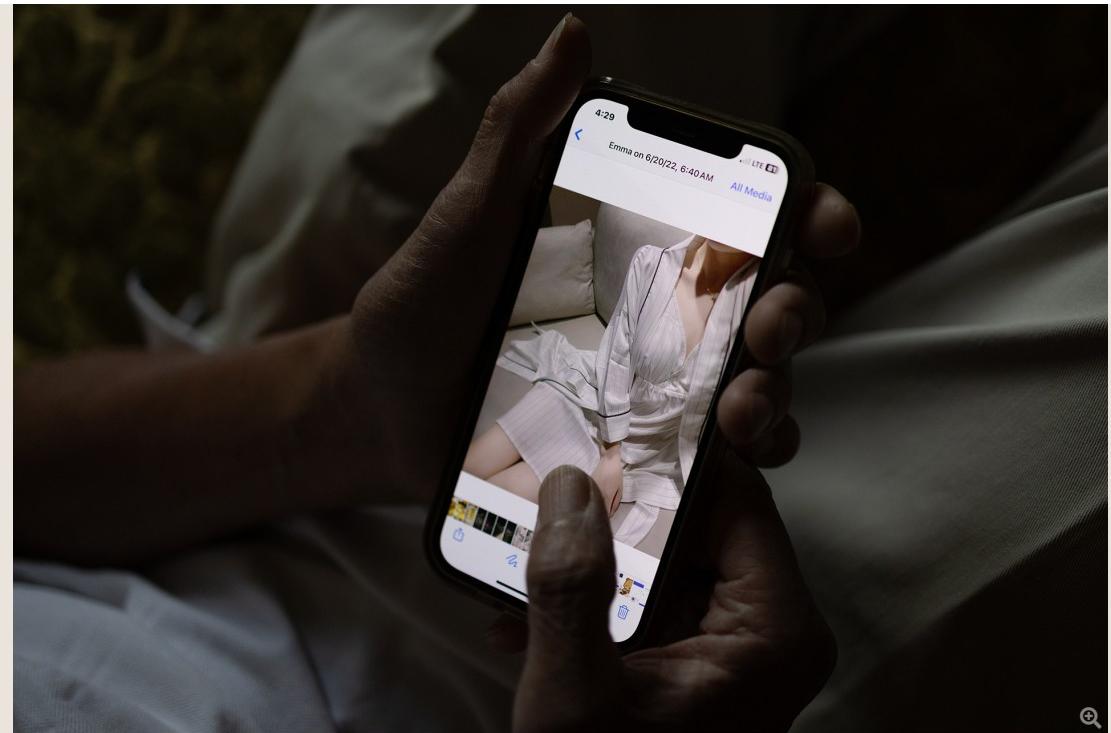
In March 2022, he received a text message from someone claiming to be a young woman, according to messages he shared. The texter later identified herself as "Emma." Over the following weeks, the man and Emma built up a rapport. Emma encouraged him to send crypto to the fraudulent website, the messages show, interspersing small talk and trading tips with what she said were photos of herself - a slim young woman with long hair.

By July last year, the California man had poured some \$2.7 million into the scam, his niece said. The victim, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Emma's "smooth talking" convinced him that he could make money. He discovered he'd been scammed when he was unable to withdraw his funds. His family reported the theft to law enforcement, incident reports show.

"I trusted her," he said, adding, "my heart is too kind." Scammers will "try to use your weakness to gain what they need."



Someone claiming to be a young woman called Emma contacted the 71-year-old California man. The two built up a rapport, and she encouraged him to send crypto to a website purporting to be a digital currency exchange. REUTERS/Carlos Barria



"Emma" interspersed small talk and trading tips with photos, including this one, of a woman that she said was herself. REUTERS/Carlos Barria

The genuine crypto exchange BigONE said it takes fraudulent websites seriously, and that it had received at least 10 reports of such sites.

"We always emphasize in any promotional material that only big.one and bigone.com are official domains," the Seychelles-registered company said.

Reuters was unable to reach the operators of the fake website.

More than \$102,000 originating from fraudsters' wallets that the California man identified were deposited into the account in Wang's name between June 26 and Oct. 23, 2022, according to Coinfirm.

Nearly all of the crypto deposited in the Wang-registered account was moved to other wallets, the transaction records reviewed by Reuters show. Between January 2021 and October 2022, about \$87.5 million was transferred to almost 50 other crypto wallets, including at least five registered at regionally based crypto exchanges, Coinfirm said.

## The account goes dark

On Nov. 3, 2022, activity in the crypto account registered to Wang abruptly stopped, the financial records show. The pattern of transfers to the account suggests Binance may have started an investigation and suspended the account, Coinfirm said.

Any financial firm should carry out additional checks on clients whose accounts process large amounts of money, said Ross Delston, a former U.S. banking regulator and expert witness on anti-money laundering issues. Red flags likely to trigger checks on the source of funds include a high volume of transactions and frequent deposits of round-numbered figures, Delston said.

The account registered to Wang frequently received such deposits, according to the financial records.

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## 亚泰经济交流总商会代表向名誉会长探玛叻名誉顾问功猜警中将拜年

亚泰经济交流总商会 2021-12-28 22:17

春回大地，万象更新！受亚泰经济交流总商会李胜交會長委派，陳錦潮常務副會長与郑友民常务副会长，分别于2021年12月27日下午和28日下午，率领商會代表，携带礼品篮前往曼谷拍喃九路探玛叻办事处和泰国网络犯罪调查警察总局，向商会名誉会长、前泰国农合部助理部长、政府民力党秘书长探瑪叻·奔袍阁下，名誉顾问、泰国网络犯罪调查警察总局功猜·概垦警中将及科技犯罪审讯指挥处主任博测·温阿南警上校等长官拜年。

陳錦潮常務副會長、鄭友民常务副会长、邱俊杰常务副会长暨李会长令公子李明基，副会长周林江、王益承，秘书长蓝振，总干事张柱一行参加上述拜访贺年活动。分别获得二位德高望重领导人的亲切接见，双方互赠礼物、互祝新年快乐，平安健康，家庭幸福，吉祥如意！



A photograph showing five men in dark suits and ties standing behind a light-colored wooden conference table. They are all wearing face masks. In the center, a man in a blue suit and yellow tie holds a large woven gift basket filled with various items. To his left, another man in a dark suit and pink tie stands. To his right, two more men in dark suits stand, and further right, a man in a dark suit and blue tie stands. The background shows a room with wooden paneling and a window with blinds. On the table in front of them, there is a small bottle of water, a smartphone, and a white mouse. A watermark in the bottom right corner of the photo reads "亚泰经济交流总商会".

Wang, at far right, and other trade group representatives present Thammanat, center, with a hamper during a meeting in Bangkok. Other faces pixelated by Reuters. The photo was posted by the Thai-Asia Economic Trade Exchange Association on its WeChat account in December 2021.

Binance didn't respond to questions about the activity in the account in Wang's name or any checks it made on the account. Binance said that it works to combat pig butchering, helping law enforcement identify, freeze and seize criminal assets, providing investigative training, and running crime prevention campaigns.

Binance chief Changpeng Zhao stepped down and pledged guilty to breaking U.S. anti-money laundering laws on Tuesday, as part of a \$4.3 billion settlement resolving a years-long probe. Over five years, Binance processed transactions by users who "laundered proceeds" of criminal activity including scams, U.S. authorities said.

Wang has continued to court officials. In August, he helped host an event in Bangkok, according to photos and a description published on the Thai-Asia association's WeChat account.

Standing on a red carpet under a chandelier and flanked by floral decorations, Wang "warmly welcomed" the guests. They included a government minister, senior police officers and Chinese embassy officials, according to the trade group's post.

Among those in attendance: Kornchai Klaiklueng, the assistant to the national police chief who previously headed up the cybercrime unit.



8月25日晚六时，泰国中华总商会光华堂鲜花锦簇，喜庆热闹，泰中长官及侨领嘉宾陆续抵达会场，亚泰经济交流总商会第三届会长李胜交、执行会长陈锦潮、名誉会长吴文辉、黄宁申、会务顾问郑友民、顾问徐位林、常务副会长邱俊杰、蔡贤林、王益承及诸位副会长、理事热情迎接来宾。晚七时，亚泰

The trade group Wang represents hosted an event this year attended by police officials Kornchai Klaiklueng, second from right, and Pongan Klaiklueng, fourth from right. Other faces pixelated by Reuters. The photo was posted by the Thai-Asia Economic Exchange Trade Association to its WeChat account in August 2023.

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Additional reporting by Chen Lin in Singapore, Carlos Barria in San Francisco, the Reuters Sydney bureau and the Reuters Beijing bureau

Photo editing: Edgar Su

Art direction and lead illustration: Eve Watling

Edited by Cassell Bryan-Low

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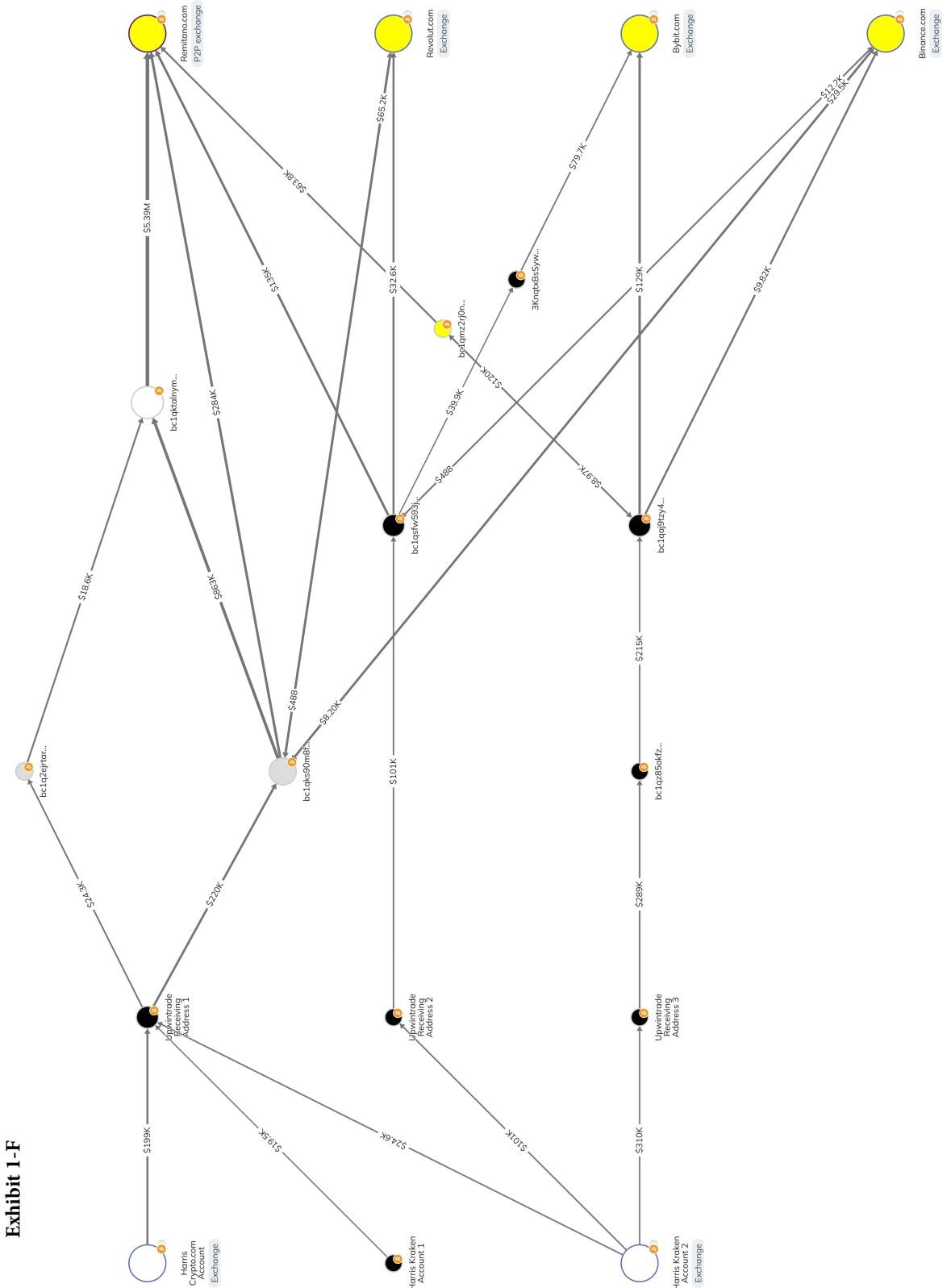
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## Exhibit 1-F



## Exhibit 1-G

## Receiving Exchange Transaction Ledger

This ledger collects all transactions in which assets transferred to the Homies were transferred to addressees associated with one of the preceding Enhances.









Total Transfers: 200

Unique Receiving Addresses:

bc1d74kuuhm33xe89mest97dwztlwwwx3219f628uney  
 38ZwAd5Bk2pMfa5ucy9fY3TfUrkvnNsf  
 3SEpJpnTZh6shnPStL11tvkdg1nwXUXKxxw  
 3MRWGe0deEDRe\_dUueG15HgPLTLfL6364A  
 3A3GobtEINNeGK8o7TNUdXYAUDf6fUE3  
 13mLDIAVyszB9y69y7ZnALeJ8gTPqRx  
 1MLxDUmHAvskKtDfDCWakSSB9zBHzrZAbh  
 3MevQzphYdrzhamet1oBRBzJp68kZVca  
 3AANqphMaexLuzf6dVc19uzuserotSVE  
 3CnPhq9GusUSLEp0pAM5uK3RtLGHBU  
 3K6d6lBa2z5CsdHHFUxHfKSd86z2n7aWN  
 3BGDfH39Wew2z47zAbhdIWfCSqYFy  
 3KKGPb4G2Gw5PNVanktjojwsSoGntrvVTB  
 3G1qdQqsJjgePUCWcGs8j17AtWn1Tov  
 3DOP9jia6i1S8sNYUZzezicUK363bUu9  
 3D8uIC-231hjk8s-8bp4tAVewAAhhxdPW  
 3BheGuSThagl7WwMMyWVgCRBa23MrATA  
 3AymPrgNa3WQzANLlaveLasheVzchAHqhe  
 14rsM4RQV0kfTD83hSher0B1xQwdrp34jh  
 1DDHhMwri49p49VfRphZqJDDfJaNGeqx  
 31j5byCaEdhfbadPpdtz27PzjfgSNvNv83  
 3fwIpa757AMP2as8yNs8tPegafULmRW  
 1H7KtpyPsyoRGSRev74syPhhXbbLMQ  
 3Bj7zaAvmnxsQfPhubegrdsSwM6ctLYpA  
 3CZGShHerrf8ewwy3sQXP96t7MArE54Ja  
 3KSvpJdRkn9sXacG'sswa5bfRf27h7Qce  
 13WWKzQ1QBx02z23saltenWw2zJbELDmg  
 1PjyGd7aCpRZo2zdJYebYPhm166  
 39TPPmjRG8ANvls1k7TRpBRDNeXwX9Gj

**Exhibit 1-H**

&lt;&gt;&lt;/&gt;&lt;5&gt; </Legacy></quote></quote>Once wire hit account let me know, it should already be in account. Maybe confirm from your bank how long it will take  
 2024/02/26 10:35:49 8:live:ph2corp\_2: Okay I&apos;t let you know once it hits.  
 2024/02/26 13:21:21 David Sham: Bitcoin just hit 54K  
 2024/02/26 13:21:28 David Sham: I told you 🔥 Still waiting on the wire, bank said should arrive today.  
 2024/02/27 08:13:17 David Sham: Okay, keep me posted  
 2024/02/27 08:13:21 David Sham: BTC already at 56K  
 2024/02/27 08:13:27 David Sham: The market is on, it's all time high run  
 2024/02/27 08:13:51 David Sham: Wire is usually same instant. Did you make a mistake with the transaction ?  
 2024/02/27 08:39:54 8:live:ph2corp\_2: I&apos;t contact Support and find out why.  
 2024/02/27 09:09:24 8:live:ph2corp\_2: Crypto Support just told me it can take 1-5 business days to process a wire deposit.  
 2024/02/27 09:49:51 David Sham: On that's new, okay link once it's cleared  
 2024/02/27 10:05:14 8:live:ph2corp\_2: Wire has arrived in my account  
 2024/02/27 10:12:45 8:live:ph2corp\_2: \$10k deposit cleared and ready to go.  
 2024/02/27 11:46:44 David Sham: Cool, you can set up a software trading account with <a href="https://upwintrade.com">https://upwintrade.com</a>  
 2024/02/27 11:47:43 David Sham: While waiting for your account to get verified you can purchase bitcoin with the money you funded on crypto.com  
 2024/02/27 11:49:10 David Sham: Once your account is verify, fund your account with the bitcoin and keep me posted when this is done so we can get started  
 2024/02/27 11:54:01 David Sham: Are you there ?  
 2024/02/27 11:58:16 8:live:ph2corp\_2: I just signed up and waiting for verification.  
 How many bitcoins shall I purchase?  
 2024/02/27 12:00:01 David Sham: Purchase bitcoin with the whole amount  
 2024/02/27 12:01:05 8:live:ph2corp\_2: I just purchased 1.9 BTC.  
 2024/02/27 12:02:27 David Sham: Purchase bitcoin with the whole amount  
 2024/02/27 12:02:55 David Sham: Okay, keep me posted  
 2024/02/27 12:04:21 8:live:ph2corp\_2: Will do.  
 2024/02/27 12:09:44 David Sham: Refresh webpage to know if you are verified  
 2024/02/27 12:10:14 David Sham: Account should verified already  
 2024/02/27 12:14:30 8:live:ph2corp\_2: It&apos;s verified. What&apos;s next?  
 2024/02/27 12:34:42 David Sham: You can fund your account by using the bitcoin you purchased on crypto.com  
 2024/02/27 12:35:12 8:live:ph2corp\_2: Can you walk me thru this.  
 2024/02/27 12:35:21 8:live:ph2corp\_2: Can we get on Skype.  
 2024/02/27 12:36:07 David Sham: Trades about to start, can't get on a call now.  
 2024/02/27 12:36:19 David Sham: On options menu select fund account  
 2024/02/27 12:36:29 David Sham: You'll see your funding BTC wallet address  
 2024/02/27 12:36:49 David Sham: Transfer BTC from crypto.com  
 To your UPWIN account  
 2024/02/27 12:37:17 David Sham: Do you understand?  
 2024/02/27 12:38:20 8:live:ph2corp\_2: No.  
 2024/02/27 12:39:00 8:live:ph2corp\_2: I whitelisted an address. That&apos;s as far as I&apos;t gotten.  
 2024/02/27 12:41:59 8:live:ph2corp\_2: I&apos;t stuck, I&apos;t wait for when you can walk me through this. Don&apos;t want to make any mistakes.  
 2024/02/27 12:46:26 David Sham: Did you find your wallet address in UPWIN ?  
 2024/02/27 12:47:14 8:live:ph2corp\_2: Is that the QR code under Fund Asset?  
 2024/02/27 12:47:58 David Sham: Yes, that's correct  
 2024/02/27 12:48:13 8:live:ph2corp\_2: Okay what&apos;s next?  
 2024/02/27 12:48:14 David Sham: Send bitcoin from your crypto.com to that address  
 2024/02/27 12:49:27 8:live:ph2corp\_2: Buy sell transfer are my options. Which one?  
 2024/02/27 12:49:54 David Sham: Transfer  
 2024/02/27 12:50:44 David Sham: You can also send me screenshot of your page  
 2024/02/27 12:50:50 8:live:ph2corp\_2: Under transfer, it says deposit or withdraw.  
 Which one?  
 2024/02/27 12:50:57 David Sham: Withdraw  
 2024/02/27 12:52:03 8:live:ph2corp\_2: Ok. And then External wallet?  
 2024/02/27 12:52:28 David Sham: Yes external wallet

## **Exhibit 1-I**

 Orlando Bell

Generated by Loni M Harris on Thursday, June 6, 2024 at 12:20 PM UTC-07:00  
Contains data you requested from June 6, 2023 at 6:22 AM to June 5, 2024 at 12:11 PM

Loni M Harris

▶ 0:02 / 2:13 ━━ 🔊 ⋮

May 10, 2024 5:00:43pm

Loni M Harris

Orlando missed your call.

May 10, 2024 3:59:59pm

Loni M Harris

On another note how's your project coming along?

May 09, 2024 6:08:33pm

Loni M Harris

Thanks for getting back to me. I really do appreciate it.

There was definitely a learning curve doing our first trade I think we're starting to understand the process

I know we were Just talking about how people are so dishonest. Its awful!!! It's happen to our business too so i understand

May 09, 2024 6:08:09pm

Orlando Bell

I usually pay him 15% upfront from my pocket, he said they were scammed multiple times, people withdrew and not pay commission. They even block him. I don't know why people will be so greedy to do that to him and his after making money for them.

David is a really awesome person, he works with a bunch of traders which can make it difficult for him to approve your withdrawal without his team. Once you understand the whole process, you won't have to worry about a thing.

May 09, 2024 5:58:13pm

Loni M Harris

I am sorry I keep bugging you. We are on a time crunch.

**Exhibit 1-J**

 DNSlytics domain upwintrade.com 🔍 ⚙️ 🌐

## upwintrade.com

### General Information

Domain	upwintrade.com
Status ?	Active (last checked on 2024-06-06)
Top-level domain (TLD) ?	.com <small>gTLD</small>
Keyword	upwintrade
Active date ?	2023-12-09
DomainRank ?	No ranking
TrancoRank ?	No ranking

### Related Keywords

Search Exact Match Wildcard Match Typos

Find related domains based on the keyword:

- Exact Match - Active domains on all Top-Level domains (TLDs) with the exact keyword **upwintrade**.
- Wildcard Match - Active domains on all TLDs containing the keyword **upwintrade**.
- Typos - Active domains on all TLDs with one changed, extra, removed or swapped character.

### DNS records

NS Records	IP	Provider	ASN
ns2.cyneedi.top <small>used by 62 domains</small>	<a href="#">162.244.81.128 (US 🇺🇸)</a>	Data Room, Inc (US 🇺🇸)	19624

- Exact Match - Active domains on all Top-Level domains (TLDs) with the exact keyword **upwintrade**.
- Wildcard Match - Active domains on all TLDs containing the keyword **upwintrade**.
- Typos - Active domains on all TLDs with one changed, extra, removed or swapped character.

### DNS records

NS Records	IP	Provider	ASN
ns2.cyneedi.top <a href="#">used by 62 domains</a>	<a href="#">162.244.81.128 (US 🇺🇸)</a>	Data Room, Inc (US 🇺🇸)	<a href="#">19624</a>
ns1.cyneedi.top <a href="#">used by 62 domains</a>	<a href="#">162.244.81.128 (US 🇺🇸)</a>	Data Room, Inc (US 🇺🇸)	<a href="#">19624</a>
A/AAAA Records		Provider	ASN
<a href="#">162.244.81.128 (US 🇺🇸)</a> <a href="#">used by 62 domains</a>		Data Room, Inc (US 🇺🇸)	<a href="#">19624</a>
MX Records	IP	Provider	ASN
upwintrade.com <a href="#">used by 1 domain</a>	<a href="#">162.244.81.128 (US 🇺🇸)</a>	Data Room, Inc (US 🇺🇸)	<a href="#">19624</a>
SPF record			
v=spf1 ip4:162.244.81.128 +a +mx ~all			

Last updated on 2024-06-06

### Website Information

Website	Redirects
HTTP statuscode	200
HTML Title	Crypto and Stock Trading with Upwin Trade
HTML Description	Being experts in serving institutional and professional clients, Upwin Trade boasts bespoke liquidity pool

HTTP statuscode	200
HTML Title	Crypto and Stock Trading with Upwin Trade
HTML Description	Being experts in serving institutional and professional clients, Upwin Trade boasts bespoke liquidity pool with best in class connectivity across all asset classes.
HTML Keywords	
Last updated on 2024-06-15	

### Whois Information

Domain Name: upwintrade.com  
 Registry Domain ID: 2836104431\_DOMAIN\_COM-VRSN  
 Registrar WHOIS Server: whois.namesrs.com  
 Registrar URL: https://www.namesrs.com  
 Creation Date: 2023-12-08T13:20:02.00Z  
 Registrar Registration Expiration Date: 2024-12-08T13:20:02.00Z  
 Registrar: Name SRS AB  
 Registrar IANA ID: 638  
 Registrar Abuse Contact Email: abuse@namesrs.com  
 Registrar Abuse Contact Phone: +46.313011220  
 Domain Status: clientTransferProhibited https://icann.org/epp#clientTransferProhibited  
 Registry Registrant ID: Protected  
 Registrant Name: Protected Protected  
 Registrant Organization: Shield Whois  
 Registrant Street: Radiovägen 2  
 Registrant City: Västra Frölunda  
 Registrant State:  
 Registrant Postal Code: 42147  
 Registrant Country: SE  
 Registrant Phone: +46.104500390  
 Registrant Fax:  
 Registrant Email: upwintrade.com@shieldwhois.com  
 Registry Admin ID: Protected  
 Admin Name: Protected Protected  
 Admin Organization: Shield Whois  
 Admin Street: Radiovägen 2  
 Admin City: Västra Frölunda  
 Admin Postal Code: 42147  
 Admin Country: SE  
 Admin Phone: +46.104500390  
 Admin Fax:  
 Admin Email: upwintrade.com@shieldwhois.com  
 Registry Tech ID: Protected  
 Tech Name: Protected Protected  
 Tech Organization: Shield Whois  
 Tech Street: Radiovägen 2  
 Tech City: Västra Frölunda  
 Tech Postal Code: 42147

Admin Phone: +46.104500390  
Admin Fax:  
Admin Email: upwintrade.com@shieldwhois.com  
Registry Tech ID: Protected  
Tech Name: Protected Protected  
Tech Organization: Shield Whois  
Tech Street: Radiovägen 2  
Tech City: Västra Frölunda  
Tech Postal Code: 42147  
Tech Country: SE  
Tech Phone: +46.104500390  
Tech Fax:  
Tech Email: upwintrade.com@shieldwhois.com  
Name Server: NS1.CYNEEDI.TOP  
Name Server: NS2.CYNEEDI.TOP  
DNSSEC: unsigned  
URL of the ICANN WHOIS Data Problem Reporting System: http://wdprs.internic.net/  
Last update of WHOIS database: 2024-06-19T12:59:59.00Z

Whois information protected.  
Contact the registrant via http://www.shieldwhois.com

Whois server 3.0

The data in the www.namesrs.com whois database is provided to you for information purposes only, that is, to assist you in obtaining information about or related to a domain name registration record. We make this information available "as is," and do not guarantee its accuracy.

By submitting a whois query, you agree that you will use this data only for lawful purposes and that, under no circumstances will you use this data to:

(1) enable high volume, automated, electronic processes that stress or load this whois database system providing you this information; or  
(2) allow, enable, or otherwise support the transmission of mass unsolicited, commercial advertising or solicitations via direct mail, electronic mail, or by telephone. The compilation, repackaging, dissemination or other use of this data is expressly prohibited without prior written consent from us.

NOTE! ALL WHOIS QUERIES AND IP ADDRESSES ARE LOGGED!

Last updated on 2024-06-19

**Exhibit 1-K**

[Home](#) / [upwintrade.com Technology Profile](#) / upwintrade.com Detailed Technology Profile

# UPWINTRADE.COM

<a href="#">Technology Profile</a>	<a href="#">Detailed Technology Profile</a>	<a href="#">Meta Profile</a>	<a href="#">Performance</a>	<a href="#">Relationship</a>	<a href="#">Redirect</a>				
<a href="#">Recommendations</a>	<a href="#">Company</a>								
You have used 1 of 10 lookups you can do on a free account currently.									
<a href="#">View Plans</a> <small><a href="#">Advanced</a> also provides unlimited detailed lookups.</small>									
<b>UPWINTRADE.COM</b>									
<b>Analytics and Tracking</b>		<b>First Detected</b>	<b>Last Detected</b>						
 <a href="#">Akamai mPulse</a> Application Performance		May 2024	Jul 2024	\$					
<b>Widgets</b>									
 <a href="#">Financial Conduct Authority</a>		May 2024	Jul 2024	\$					
 <a href="#">JivoSite</a> Live Chat		May 2024	Jul 2024	\$					
 <a href="#">WPML Multilingual</a> WordPress Plugins		May 2024	Jul 2024	\$					
 <a href="#">Wordpress Plugins</a>		May 2024	Jun 2024						
<b>Frameworks</b>									
 <a href="#">CodeIgniter</a>		May 2024	Jun 2024						
 <a href="#">Foundation</a>		May 2024	Jun 2024						
<b>Content Delivery Network</b>									
 <a href="#">UNPKG</a>		May 2024	Jul 2024						
 <a href="#">Akamai</a>		May 2024	Jul 2024						
<b>Mobile</b>									
 <a href="#">Apple Mobile Web Clips Icon</a>		May 2024	Jul 2024						
 <a href="#">Viewport Meta</a>		May 2024	Jul 2024						
 <a href="#">iPhone / Mobile Compatible</a>		May 2024	Jul 2024						
<b>Payment</b>									
 <a href="#">MasterCard</a> Payment Acceptance		May 2024	Jun 2024						
 <a href="#">Visa</a> Payment Acceptance		May 2024	Jun 2024						
<b>Content Management System</b>									
 <a href="#">WordPress</a> Open Source - Blog		May 2024	Jul 2024						
<b>JavaScript Libraries and Functions</b>									
 <a href="#">AOS</a>		May 2024	Jul 2024						
 <a href="#">jQuery</a> JavaScript Library		May 2024	Jul 2024						
 <a href="#">jQuery UI</a> jQuery Plugin - UI		May 2024	Jul 2024						
 <a href="#">jQuery Marquee</a> jQuery Plugin		May 2024	Jul 2024						
 <a href="#">DataTables</a> jQuery Plugin		May 2024	Jun 2024						
<b>SSL Certificates</b>									
 <a href="#">SSL by Default</a>		May 2024	Jun 2024						
 <a href="#">LetsEncrypt</a> Root Authority		May 2024	Jun 2024						
<b>Email Hosting Providers</b>									

	<a href="#">SPE</a>	May 2024	Jun 2024
<b>Web Servers</b>			
	<a href="#">Apache</a>	May 2024	Jun 2024

UPWINTRADE.COM/*		
Payment	First Detected	Last Detected
w <a href="#">Euro</a> <small>Currency</small>	Jun 2024	Jul 2024

Exhibit 1-L

The screenshot shows the Upwin Trade mobile application interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with icons for back, forward, and search. The main header reads "UPWIN TRADE" and "THE BEST TRADING APP". Below the header, there is a sub-header "TRADE SMARTER WITH WIDER CHOICE OF SINGLE STOCKS". A sub-sub-header "Our true strength lies in our diversity and multi-faceted approach to finding most optimal solutions for our clients and our partners' needs." is displayed. The central part of the screen features several trading cards for stocks:

- APPLE**: Price 188.40, Spread 0.70000, Last Update 12:40 PM, TRADE NOW! button.
- AMAZON**: Price 129.30, Spread 0.48000, Last Update 12:40 PM, TRADE NOW! button.
- FACEBOOK**: Price 287.27, Spread 0.48000, Last Update 12:40 PM, TRADE NOW! button.

On the right side of the screen, there is a "Business Messenger by JivoChat" window with a message from "jivochat" and a "Send us a message" button. Below the messenger window, there is a "LOGIN ACCOUNT" button and a link to "OPEN LIVE ACCOUNT" with the URL "HTTPS://UPWINTRADE.COM/INDEX.PHP?HOME/CLIENT\_SERVICES>". On the far right, there is a "Type here" input field and a keyboard icon. At the bottom, there is a row of currency pairs with their current exchange rates:

Currency Pair	Buy	Sell
USDCNH	5.2800 / 2.5309	1.32176 / 1.32179
USDCAD	1.32176 / 1.32179	1.71576 / 1.71607
GBPNZD	2.08362 / 2.08400	2.08349 / 2.083742
EURZAR	1.09111 / 1.09514	1.09111 / 1.09514
EURUSD	28.54186 /	28.54186 /

## Exhibit 1-M

 **DNSlytics**

domain ▾ davidshamlian.com

🔍

# davidshamlian.com

## General Information

Domain davidshamlian.com

Status ?

Active (Last checked on 2024-07-13)

Top-level domain (TLD) ?

.com gTLD

Keyword

davidshamlian

Active date ?

2024-01-10

DomainRank ?

No ranking

TrancoRank ?

No ranking

🔍 Related Domains

[Search](#)   [Exact Match](#)   [Wildcard Match](#)   [Typos](#)

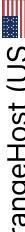
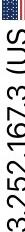
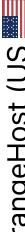
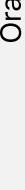
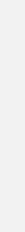
Find related domains based on the keyword:

- Exact Match - Active domains on all Top-Level domains (TLDs) with the exact keyword **davidshamlian**.
- Wildcard Match - Active domains on all TLDs containing the keyword **davidshamlian**.
- Typos - Active domains on all TLDs with one changed, extra, removed or swapped character.

## dns DNS Records

[Domain Records](#)

[PTR Records](#) 

NS Records	IP	Provider	ASN
ns2.orangehost.com <u>used by 20,695 domains</u>	173.252.167.3 (US  )	OrangeHost (US  )	<u>19853</u>
ns1.orangehost.com <u>used by 20,701 domains</u>	209.172.2.3 (US  )	OrangeHost (US  )	<u>19853</u>
A/AAAA Records		Provider	ASN
173.252.167.160 (US  ) <u>used by 563 domains</u>		OrangeHost (US  )	<u>19853</u>

MX Records	IP	Provider	ASN
davidshamlian.com used by 1 domain	173.252.167.160 (US 	OrangeHost (US 	<u>19853</u>

Website Information	
Website	Redirects 
HTTP Statuscode	200
HTML Title	David Shamlan – Crypto Trader
HTML Description	
HTML Keywords	

## Whois Information

Domain Name: davidshamlian.com  
Registry Domain ID: 2844545195\_DOMAIN\_COM-VRSN  
Registrar WHOIS Server: whois.wildwestdomains.com  
Registrar URL: https://www.wildwestdomains.com  
Updated Date: 2024-01-09T08:01:00Z  
Creation Date: 2024-01-09T08:01:00Z  
Registrar Registration Expiration Date: 2025-01-09T08:01:00Z  
Registrar: Wild West Domains, LLC  
Registrar IANA ID: 440  
Registrar Abuse Contact Email: abuse@wildwestdomains.com  
Registrar Abuse Contact Phone: +1.4806242505  
Reseller: OrangeHost  
Domain Status: clientTransferProhibited https://icann.org/epp#clientTransferProhibited  
Domain Status: clientUpdateProhibited https://icann.org/epp#clientUpdateProhibited  
Domain Status: clientRenewProhibited https://icann.org/epp#clientRenewProhibited  
Domain Status: clientDeleteProhibited https://icann.org/epp#clientDeleteProhibited  
Registrant Organization: David Shamlian  
Registrant State/Province: Arizona  
Registrant Country: US  
Registrant Email: Select Contact Domain Holder link at <https://www.secureserver.net/whois?plid=1387&domain=davidshamlian>  
Admin Email: Select Contact Domain Holder link at <https://www.secureserver.net/whois?plid=1387&domain=davidshamlian>  
Tech Email: Select Contact Domain Holder link at <https://www.secureserver.net/whois?plid=1387&domain=davidshamlian>  
Name Server: NS1.ORANGEHOST.COM  
Name Server: NS2.ORANGEHOST.COM  
DNSSEC: unsigned  
URL of the ICANN WHOIS Data Problem Reporting System: <http://wdprs.internic.net/>  
=>> Last update of WHOIS database: 2024-07-26T13:57:22 <<  
For more information on Whois status codes, please visit <https://icann.org/epp>

**TERMS OF USE:** The data contained in this registrar's Whois database, while believed by the registrar to be reliable, is provided "as is" with no guarantee or warranties regarding its accuracy. This information is provided for the sole purpose of assisting you in obtaining information about domain name registration records. Any use of this data for any other purpose is expressly forbidden without the prior written permission of this registrar. By submitting an inquiry, you agree to these terms and limitations of warranty. In particular, you agree not

to use this data to allow, enable, or otherwise support the dissemination or collection of this data, in part or in its entirety, for any purpose, such as transmission by e-mail, telephone, postal mail, facsimile or other means of mass unsolicited, commercial advertising or solicitations of any kind, including spam. You further agree not to use this data to enable high volume, automated or robotic electronic processes designed to collect or compile this data for any purpose, including mining this data for your own personal or commercial purposes. Failure to comply with these terms may result in termination of access to the Whois database. These terms may be subject to modification at any time without notice.

Last updated on 2024-07-26

[Terms and conditions](#) | [Privacy policy](#) | [Cookie policy](#) | [Credits](#)

## Exhibit 1-N

[Home](#) / [davidshamlian.com Technology Profile](#) / davidshamlian.com Detailed Technology Profile

# DAVIDSHAMLIAN.COM

<a href="#">Technology Profile</a>	<a href="#">Detailed Technology Profile</a>	<a href="#">Meta Profile</a>	<a href="#">Performance</a>	<a href="#">Relationship</a>	<a href="#">Redirect</a>				
<a href="#">Recommendations</a>	<a href="#">Company</a>								
You have used 2 of 10 lookups you can do on a free account currently.									
<a href="#">View Plans</a>									
<small><a href="#">Advanced</a> also provides unlimited detailed lookups.</small>									
<b>DAVIDSHAMLIAN.COM</b>									
<b>Widgets</b>		<b>First Detected</b>		<b>Last Detected</b>					
 <a href="#">Redux Framework</a> WordPress Plugins		May 2024		Jun 2024					
 <a href="#">Contact Form 7</a> Feedback Forms and Surveys		May 2024		Jun 2024					
 <a href="#">Google Font API</a> Fonts		May 2024		Jun 2024					
 <a href="#">Wordpress Plugins</a>		May 2024		May 2024					
 <a href="#">Elementor</a> WordPress Plugins		May 2024		May 2024					
<b>Mobile</b>									
 <a href="#">Apple Mobile Web Clips Icon</a>		May 2024		Jun 2024					
 <a href="#">Viewport Meta</a>		May 2024		Jun 2024					
 <a href="#">iPhone / Mobile Compatible</a>		May 2024		Jun 2024					
<b>Content Delivery Network</b>									
 <a href="#">GStatic Google Static Content</a>		May 2024		Jun 2024					
<b>Content Management System</b>									
 <a href="#">WordPress</a> Open Source • Blog		May 2024		Jun 2024					
 <a href="#">WordPress 6.5</a>		May 2024		Jun 2024					
<b>JavaScript Libraries and Functions</b>									
 <a href="#">jQuery</a> JavaScript Library		May 2024		Jun 2024					
 <a href="#">jQuery UI</a> jQuery Plugin • UI		May 2024		Jun 2024					
 <a href="#">jQuery 3.7.1</a>		May 2024		Jun 2024					
 <a href="#">jQuery Waypoints</a>		May 2024		Jun 2024					
 <a href="#">Slick JS</a> Animation		May 2024		Jun 2024					
 <a href="#">Magnific Popup</a>		May 2024		Jun 2024					
● <a href="#">Lightbox</a>		May 2024		Jun 2024					
<b>Verified Link</b>									
 <a href="#">Facebook</a>		May 2024		Jun 2024					
<b>SSL Certificates</b>									
 <a href="#">SSL by Default</a>		May 2024		May 2024					
 <a href="#">Let's Encrypt</a> Root Authority		May 2024		May 2024					
<b>Email Hosting Providers</b>									
 <a href="#">SPF</a>		May 2024		May 2024					
<b>Operating Systems and Servers</b>									
 <a href="#">QUIC</a>		May 2024		May 2024					
<b>Syndication Techniques</b>									

 <a href="#">Really Simple Discovery</a>	May 2024	Jun 2024
w <a href="#">RSS</a>	May 2024	Jun 2024